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David Owen's Apologia • Ann Devroy's Dilemma

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"Sarah's leukemia was frightening enough. Then an infection set in that nearly killed all hope."

MICHAEL DEUTSCH, SARAH'S FATHER
BURLINGTON, WISCONSIN

Battling leukemia when you're only six is scary. Being besieged by a life-threatening infection on top of it is devastating.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Kemp fire

Now that Bob Dole and Lamar Alexander may be unable to stop Pat Buchanan's devotees from seizing the Republican nomination, you can almost hear the rumblings for someone else. Someone sunny, empathetic but conservative: a Lamar with substance. The most obvious candidate is Jack Kemp; and a boomlet, of sorts, is now palpable. Before his collapse, Forbes rose to prominence on a Kemp-like message. So why not the real thing? And, as Buchanan alienates minorities, moderates and women, and Dole and Lamar fumble for a message, a panicked Republican establishment might just turn to Jack Kemp's bleeding-heart conservatism as the answer.

There's only one thing wrong with this happy scenario: Kemp has been wrong about almost everything in his career. Over the past quarter-century, he has been present at the creation of practically every awful idea the right has foisted on America. He is the Kilroy of conservative public policy quackery.

First there was supply-side economics. With Jude Wanniski, Kemp arranged a meeting in early 1980 in California between supply-side swami Arthur Laffer and candidate Ronald Reagan, from which Reagan emerged a convert. During the campaign that followed, Reagan claimed that slashing taxes, even without radical cuts in spending, would create enough growth to balance the budget by his second year in office. By his third, it would be \$100 billion in surplus. We know what happened.

"True, nominal budget deficits were higher at the end of the Reagan era," Kemp wrote recently in *The New York Times*. "But as a percentage of the gross domestic product, the deficit actually diminished during the 1980s." This is simply wrong. The deficit, as a percentage of GDP, shot up to an all-time high following the Reagan tax cuts—from 2.6 percent in 1981 to 4.1 percent in 1982 and an extraordinary 6.3 percent in 1983. Under Kennedy, Johnson and

Nixon the deficit had usually been below 1 percent of GDP, and under Ford and Carter it had never passed 4.3 percent (1976); during Reagan's two administrations it was more than 5 percent of GDP for four years in a row. Only after tax increases late in the 1980s did the deficit begin to decline.

Not content to champion right-wing fallacies, Kemp has coopted several liberal ones as well. As Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) his motives were praiseworthy. His policies, which synthesized the worst aspects of the War on Poverty and of free-market radicalism, were not. Kemp championed the privatization of public housing units, which costs more than building new units and giving them away for free. One of his other bright ideas was to allow welfare recipients to keep 85 percent of every new dollar they earned without having their benefits reduced. As Richard Darman pointed out, this would allow people earning \$70,000 a year to collect welfare.

The anti-poverty program with which Kemp is most closely associated is the "enterprise zone" scheme. (Kemp wanted to call these "opportunity zones" until Darman pointed out that the acronym would spell "Oz.") For years, states have been trying to bribe businesses to open up plants and factories within their borders with tax abatements and regulatory waivers, usually with little to show for their efforts but depleted state coffers and reduced public services. According to a study quoted in *The New York Times*, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut lose \$1 billion a year trying to lure businesses away from neighboring states, or to keep them at home, through tax incentives. Kemp wants inner cities to get in on this race-to-the-bottom strategy, potentially by waiving minimum wage laws and health standards. In other words, he would relegate the poor he wants to help to the status of second-class citizens as a matter of public policy.

Then there is Kemp's establishment-pleasing adherence to two of the worst legacies of '60s liberalism: affirmative action and an automatic-pilot immigration policy based on family reunification. Kemp has warned fellow conservatives against opposing affirmative action. In July 1995 he denounced the decision of the University of California regents to eliminate racial preferences in admissions. He also joined William Bennett in denouncing California's Proposition 187. Though criticized by

the media elite (including this magazine), Prop 187 was in fact perfectly measured. It generously granted emergency aid to illegal aliens even as it sought to insure that those who had violated federal immigration laws would be deported.

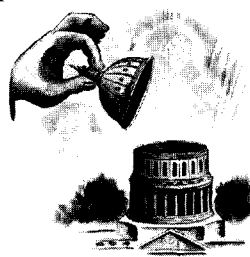
Compiling an exhaustive list of the boondoggles Kemp has applauded would be overly ambitious. But here are a few more: Star Wars, the gold standard and, now, the flat tax. The point is not just that Kemp has been wrong. There is a method to his mistakenness. His deeds and words illustrate a mentality that once flourished on the radical left but now finds domicile on the radical right. Alien to traditional conservatism, it is

characterized by utopian futurism, a great and often misplaced faith in technological fixes and financial gimmicks, a reluctance to believe that there are genuine and tragic conflicts of interest between subcultures, classes and nations and a dogmatic insistence that all good things go together.

What the gold standard, supply-side economics and SDI share is the promise of replacing politics with mechanics. The gold standard will eliminate the need for central banks to exercise discretion in manipulating the money supply. Supply-side economics will permit government to cut taxes without engaging in the painful trade-offs that commensurate spending cuts would require. As for SDI, an expert at the Heritage Foundation informed me when I was working there that, "if we have SDI, then we won't need allies." Add up these pleasant delusions, and you have a post-political world in which finance, budgeting and diplomacy are so many spinning cogs in a perpetual motion machine.

In the real world, of course, there is no escape from politics, which Max Weber described as "the slow drilling of hard boards." Governing is hard. Discretion must be exercised on the basis of uncertain knowledge; powerful interests must be placated or defeated; allies must be won and enemies outwitted. Politics is not ideology (which John Adams called "the science of idiocy"). What we need in Washington to clean up the messes Kempites have produced are politicians, not visionaries. Bob Dole is a politician. So is Lamar Alexander. So is Bill Clinton, whose record of governance looks even better compared to Republican quackery of the Kemp as well as the Buchanan variety.

MICHAEL LIND





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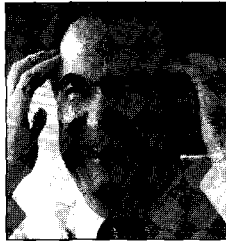
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CORRESPONDENCE

Peace in sight

To the editors:

If David Rieff's article were converted momentarily to a substantive legal complaint ("The Institution That Saw No Evil," February 12), his claim would be dismissed summarily for legal insufficiency and the failure to state a cause of action.

He ascribes moral bankruptcy to the United Nations, when any such failure is actually attributable to the Western members of the Security Council—the United States, Great Britain and France as well as Russia. For three years, while war raged in the Balkans, there was no agreement among these powers on how to deal with a quasi-civil war, nor a willingness to gain the support of their domestic constituencies in pursuit of a policy that might terminate hostilities. Any wonder, therefore, that the U.N. faced mission impossible? Rather than direct criticism at the source, Rieff succumbs to the facile temptation to blame bureaucratic tradition in the U.N. and its "abject subservience." In reality, the U.N. Secretariat is only as good or functional as is its Security Council.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali's mistaken view of this conflict—"a rich man's war"—along with his concern for a second term in office and his alleged lack of moral passion were not, in the end, decisive. If there had been the will to end the fighting among the belligerents, indeed, there would have been a way.

The U.N. Security Council members can be likened to a dog; and the U.N. Secretariat to its tail. No matter how refined, one wags the other.

ELLIOTT A. COHEN
New York, New York

To the editors:

David Rieff's critique of the U.N.'s role in Bosnia is insightful, but I have what I believe is more than a nit-pick regarding his concluding comment that "anyone who will not have to kill or die" in a war ought not venture an opinion about the "relative merits of [that] war against an unjust peace." More to the point is that anyone who will not have to suffer under an unjust peace ought to "think a great deal" before imposing it.

GARY MAILMAN
New York, New York

To the editors:

David Rieff's illuminating analysis of the

U.N.'s role in Bosnia was unfortunately marred by four rather gratuitous attempts to liken the hierarchical structure of the U.N. to that of the Roman Catholic Church. I write not to debate the comparison, which is so rhetorical as to prove useless but, rather, to point out the irony of his final image, that of a coffee mug bearing the words, "If you want peace, work for justice." Those words were uttered by none other than Pope Paul VI in his address to the U.N. General Assembly in 1964.

PAUL G. CROWLEY
Santa Clara, California

Bowling alone

To the editors:

Michael Lewis opens his account of the Morry Taylor campaign in Iowa ("The Griz," February 5) by perpetuating what may be the silliest stereotype in America: that Midwesterners have a poor appreciation of humor. One can ask, legitimately, compared with whom? As a native of Ohio, humor in all its forms was a constant among my friends and relatives, and a half century of experiences outside the region gave me no reason for feeling inadequate.

It was kind of Lewis to cite Garrison Keillor and David Letterman as, apparently, exceptions to the rule. The names suggest that he is both young and not well versed regarding humor in twentieth-century America. From Ohio alone I can add a partial list of performers who have made the entire country laugh: Bob Hope, Joe E. Brown, Jamie Farr, Danny Thomas, Paul Lynde, Phyllis Diller and Jonathan Winters. Others from the "heartland" include: Mark Twain (Missouri), Will Rogers (Oklahoma), Red Skelton (Indiana), Jack Benny (Illinois) and Johnny Carson (Nebraska). A list of writers would be even longer, but I will note that James Thurber was a fellow Buckeye.

People from the Midwest may indeed be deficient in certain qualities, but the record is clear that a sense of what is funny is not one of them. We can even appreciate the humor in Lewis's writing, even if he doesn't know much about the Midwest.

THOMAS D. ANDERSON
Bowling Green, Ohio

Carter doctrine

To the editors:

In your Notebook item on the recent Palestinian elections (February 12), you unfairly dismiss the efforts by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and 650 international observers as uninformed

window dressing for Arafat's election. You characterized Carter's trip as "a family outing." In fact, he co-chaired with former Polish Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka a joint Carter Center-National Democratic Institute (NDI) delegation of forty people from eleven countries. You wrote that the observers "arrived too late" to see irregularities, and, while it is true that our delegation arrived a week before the elections, we had sent three missions in July, November and December, and NDI has been working there for two years.

You wrote that Carter "testified unhesitatingly to the probity and fairness of the [Palestinian electoral] process" and denounced the Israelis as "bullies, and worse," but his concluding statement reiterated our delegation's concerns with electoral irregularities, including "cases of intimidation by Palestinian security officials." Early in the day, Carter noted problems with the size of and the surveillance by Israeli security forces in East Jerusalem, but in the delegation's concluding statement, Carter complimented the Israeli government for its rapid and constructive response in reducing the numbers of security personnel and facilitating access to the polling booths. We regret that TNR did not take into account our full assessment.

ROBERT PASTOR
HARRY BARNES
The Carter Center
Atlanta, Georgia
KENNETH WOLLACK
National Democratic Institute
Washington, D.C.

Adams family values

To the editors:

It is sad that a book as insightful as Bill Bradley's, which has almost no parallel among autobiographies of individuals who have ever served in the U.S. Senate, should receive the kind of review that Joe Klein ("Hoop Dreams," February 12) has provided. Klein wonders "what Bradley thinks of Clinton," a matter of less than cosmic importance. In being so preoccupied with issues of this kind, he neglects to consider the very original observations and reflections Bradley makes on matters as complex and various as religion, ethnicity, race, family, regionalism, foreign affairs and money. Klein finds "the vaguest hint of Henry Adams" in the senator from New Jersey, "staring across Lafayette Square at the White House, fascinated and horrified, as a succession of uncultivated, disappointing men seize their moment." The parallel is far-fetched. Bradley and Adams are as distant from each other in their values, opinions and preoccupations as Bradley

is from Clinton. Klein has mistaken what he imagines to be Bradley's wistfulness and indecisiveness for a concern—uncommon in the U.S. Senate—with what the late Judith Shklar called the “ordinary vices,” hypocrisy, cruelty, snobbery and treachery, as each manifests itself in late-twentieth-century America.

STEPHEN R. GRAUBARD
Cambridge, Massachusetts

(Sic)

To the editors:

Leaving aside the absurdity of writing you a letter on February 3 in reference to something published in the February 12 edition of your magazine, I could not help but be disturbed by the small, lead item in Sic Transit in Notebook (“A judge in Stanton, Michigan, sentenced a man convicted of beating his wife to a three-fingered slap on the wrist, saying ‘Don’t do that’...”).

I happened to hear a radio interview with this judge. It seems the defendant’s wife set him up on a phony abuse charge in order to win joint custody of their children. The man did not “beat” his wife. Even the officers called to the scene by the wife admitted that, were it not for inflexible state law that mandates they intervene once called regardless of the lack of evidence, they would not have bothered with this situation.

No abuse took place, but, given state law and a social climate that was motivating the (election-minded) district attorney, the case came to trial. Even the jurors expressed their regret that state law left them no choice but to find for the plaintiff, even though this gender-balanced panel saw the lack of merit in the case. The judge ruled in a manner consistent with his interpretation that the only abuse present in this case was an abuse of the law and the judicial system.

TIMM R. SWEENEY
Boca Raton, Florida

Heir Jordan

To the editors:

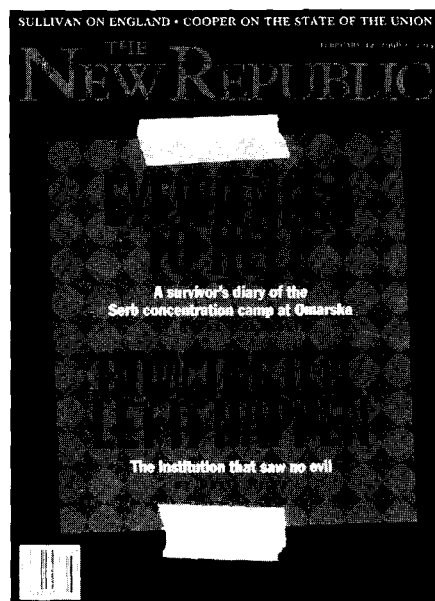
In his tribute to Barbara Jordan (“Jordan’s Rules,” February 12), Michael Lind wrote, “The causes that [she] fought for are losing out to the forces that Richard Nixon unleashed,” offering as an example the work of Congress’s Republican majority. President Nixon has been criticized by many on the right for establishing the EPA, proposing a guaranteed minimum income and national health insurance and boosting funding for the arts and humanities endowments and public television. So how come he gets to be the whipping boy of both conserva-

tives and their critics, and for precisely the same policies? Is this the force that Oliver Stone has unleashed by making his lying movie (or as your Stone-friendly film writer notes periphrastically, by being “historically idiosyncratic”)? Does Richard Nixon now occupy a position in American culture where he will be blamed for every single thing abhorred by liberal persons of good taste—the rise of Newt Gingrich, the Kennedy assassination, the demise of the long-playing record, the invention of Cheez Whiz?

JOHN H. TAYLOR
Yorba Linda, California

To the editors:

Hey, Michael Lind’s “Jordan’s Rules” eulogizing Barbara Jordan says, “She supported Lyndon Johnson against the



radical left in 1968 and helped keep the state delegation—correctly, in my view—on the side of the ‘hawks’ during the Vietnam war.”

My, how historical revisionism has set in on your pages and on your staff. The facts are that, in 1968, the late U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough, the only member of the Senate to have endorsed Eugene McCarthy’s candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination, led an unsuccessful battle in Chicago to unseat a Texas delegation headed by his archenemy, then Texas governor John Connally, of which Jordan was a member. This was but two years before the Connally-Johnson forces defeated Yarborough in the 1970 Democratic primary with Lloyd Bentsen, in a campaign of TV spots linking Yarborough to the rioting in Chicago.

Yarborough, who died January 27 at age 92, was a fearless and enlightened Texas populist, never a radical leftist. He championed education, the environment and his beloved little people and,

with Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, was one of two senators from the former Confederate states to vote for the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

A political organization of Yarborough’s ardent backers, the Harris County Democrats, nurtured Barbara Jordan’s early political career in Houston and provided the muscle for her election to the state Senate in 1966. But, unlike Jordan, Yarborough never had any truck with the monied establishment led by Johnson, Connally and Bentsen, which dominated Texas politics.

DAVE SHAPIRO
Austin, Texas

Tree huggers

To the editors:

Are conservatives onto something? J.E. Link, in the February 12 NEW REPUBLIC (Correspondence), voices a common conservative theme. Responding to a previous letter, Link says: “Matthew Miller refers to the federal mortgage interest deduction as a subsidy, reflecting the statist liberal view that government has a higher claim to income than individuals earning it.” He goes on to state his views as to the appropriate distribution of this seeming natural resource. Have conservatives actually found the mythical “money tree,” or are they simply overlooking the fact that money is printed and distributed by the government?

I can understand being unhappy or resentful that government may separate me from more of the money that I have worked for, inherited, found, tricked people out of, etc., than I would wish to be the case, but, so far, I haven’t found a naturally occurring, untainted-by-government source of money that I can call my own. I wish that some enlightened proponent of the proposition that government (or foreign wage-slaves, or actual slaves, or low-wage Americans, or...) exists to enable me to accumulate obscene (but holy) amounts of wealth would tell me where the tree is.

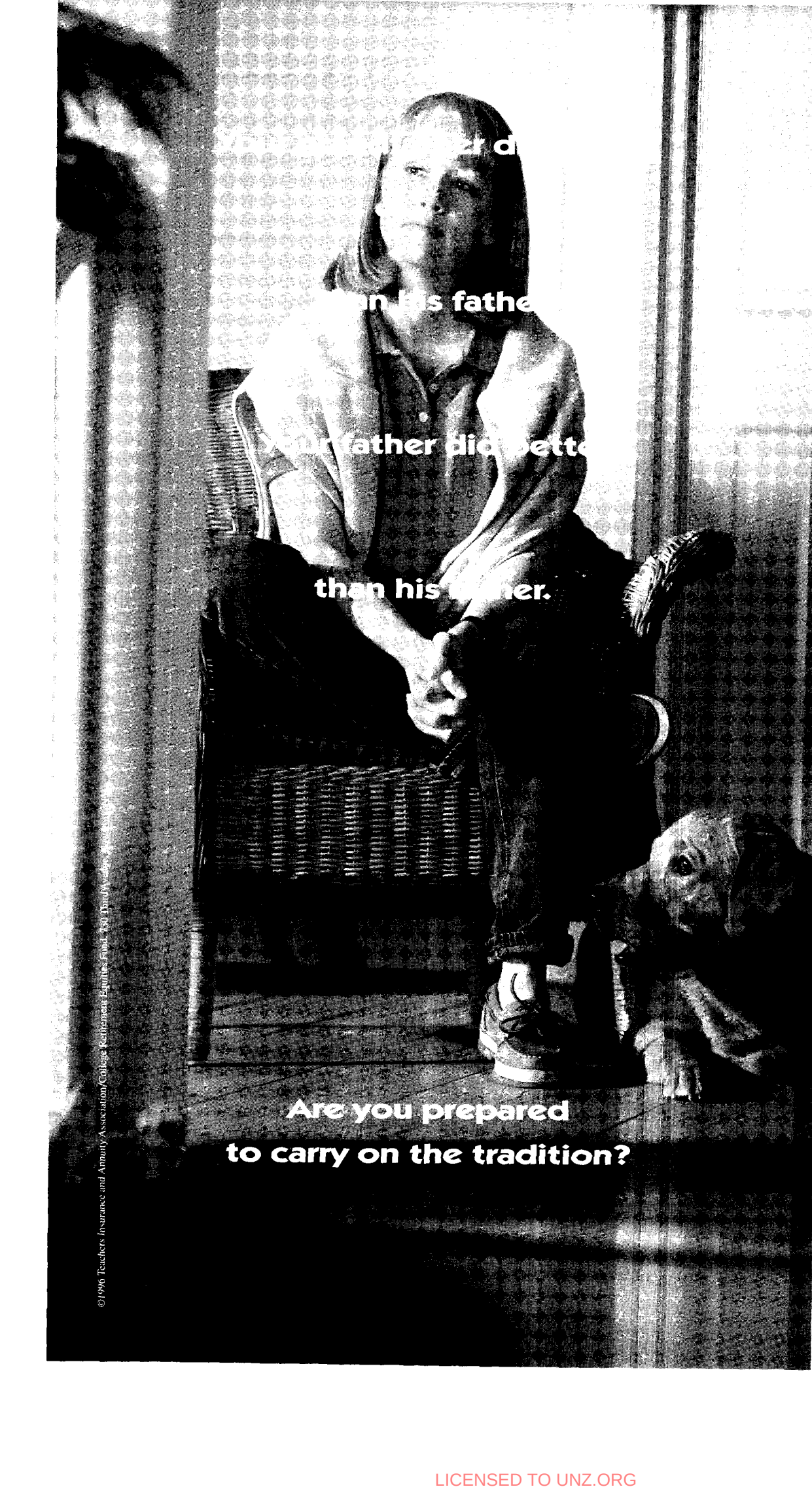
GARY WHITLOCK
Montrose, Colorado

Scottish

To the editors:

Michael Lewis’s otherwise worthwhile “Crystal Owl” Campaign Journal piece on Steve Forbes (February 12) contains three mentions of “WASP” in relation to the candidate. This is an outrage. Mr. Forbes is not Anglo-Saxon, but Scottish, and therefore “WSP.” It probably abbreviates better in Gaelic.

W. SCOTT AXFORD
Providence, Rhode Island



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...father did better
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MARCH 11, 1996

WHO IS LARRY PRATT?

Ever since he first toyed with the idea of running for president, Patrick J. Buchanan has demanded only to be taken seriously. So far, however, his chief Republican opponents, the leaders of the party and the national media have merely condescended to him. The result of the free ride is that Buchanan is now a deadly serious candidate for the Republican nomination. Fine. But that means the condescension has to end. Buchanan's factual claims, his rhetoric and his personal loyalties must now be examined as if his words, and his associations, were adumbrations of a now-thinkable Buchanan White House. To do less would be to perpetuate the error we've made so far by patronizing him and so holding him—and his supporters—to a lower standard.

Take Buchanan's defense of Larry Pratt, his campaign co-chairman until last week when Pratt took a leave of absence following revelations of his links to white supremacist groups. "All I know is Larry Pratt of the Gun Owners of America has been a loyal early supporter of mine when no one else did [sic]," Buchanan said on February 15. But this was not literally "all" Buchanan knew, or should have known, at the moment he uttered those words. In fact, this much was already on the public record: on repeated occasions, Pratt spoke at meetings and on cable television programs as the invited guest of Pete Peters, a leader of the pseudo-religion known as Christian Identity.

Christian Identity preaches that Jews are the offspring of Satan and that blacks are a "pre-Adamic" race of sub-humans created before Adam and Eve. At a 1992 meeting, Pratt stood by as Peters raged against "Talmudic filth." (Pratt has also been a guest on the anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby's "Radio Free America.") Randy Weaver of Ruby Ridge fame was a Christian Identity adherent; the sect is closely tied to violent militia groups such as the one that spawned Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. Basically, Larry Pratt is one of the few barely politically presentable ideologues of the American militia movement. In his 1990 book, *Armed People Victorious*, he urged the United States to adopt a system of civil defense patrols like the one imposed on the population of Guatemala by its military bosses. "It is time that the United States return to reliance on an armed people," he wrote. "There is no acceptable alternative."

Has Buchanan read *Armed People Victorious*? Does he agree with it? And, in the Oklahoma primary, will Buchanan stick up for Pratt's contention, offered three days after the mass murder at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal

Building, that "whoever did that in Oklahoma City had descended to the level of the FBI"? No one has asked him such questions so far.

Buchanan protests that he himself wouldn't have associated with the likes of Peters, but says he won't fire Pratt until the man has had "a chance to defend himself." Pratt has now given his defense: he did not know Pete Peters was a racist and would have objected if he did. Does anyone find this credible? More to the point, does Pat Buchanan?

We don't know the answers to these questions, either, because neither GOP leaders nor the press have really held Buchanan to account on the matter. Instead, Buchanan is allowed to stonewall, asserting that Pratt is being "smeared" in part because he is "a devout Christian." Buchanan should be obliged to name exactly what groups and individuals in America are out to persecute the Christian majority. "[T]he dogs are on" Pratt, Buchanan whines. Does Buchanan, who has elsewhere claimed to be appalled at the lowering of political discourse, mean that no one is criticizing Pratt in good faith—that anyone who does so is a "dog"?

To be sure, Buchanan has fired two campaign munchkins with connections to David Duke. But until Buchanan fires and denounces Pratt, it will be perfectly reasonable to construe Buchanan's position this way: his campaign co-chairman condones American racists and fascists, but, because that man has done political favors for Buchanan and because his accusers are acting out of anti-Christian prejudice, Buchanan will accept Pratt's patently false denials, smear Pratt's critics and keep Pratt on his campaign letterhead.

It is also fair to argue that Larry Pratt is to Pat Buchanan's candidacy as Louis Farrakhan was to Jesse Jackson's in 1984. Jackson maintained his solidarity with Farrakhan out of an underlying inability to break ranks with the thuggish activists of the black inner city for whom Farrakhan is an icon. Buchanan keeps solidarity with Pratt out of a primordial dependence on the thuggish activists of the white hinterland for whom Pratt is an icon. No enemies on the right, or almost none, appears to be the watchword of the Buchanan campaign. That campaign, abetted by the laziness and chumminess of America's political and media elite, is now on the verge of acquiring decisive power in one of the two major political parties in the United States of America. •



NOTEBOOK

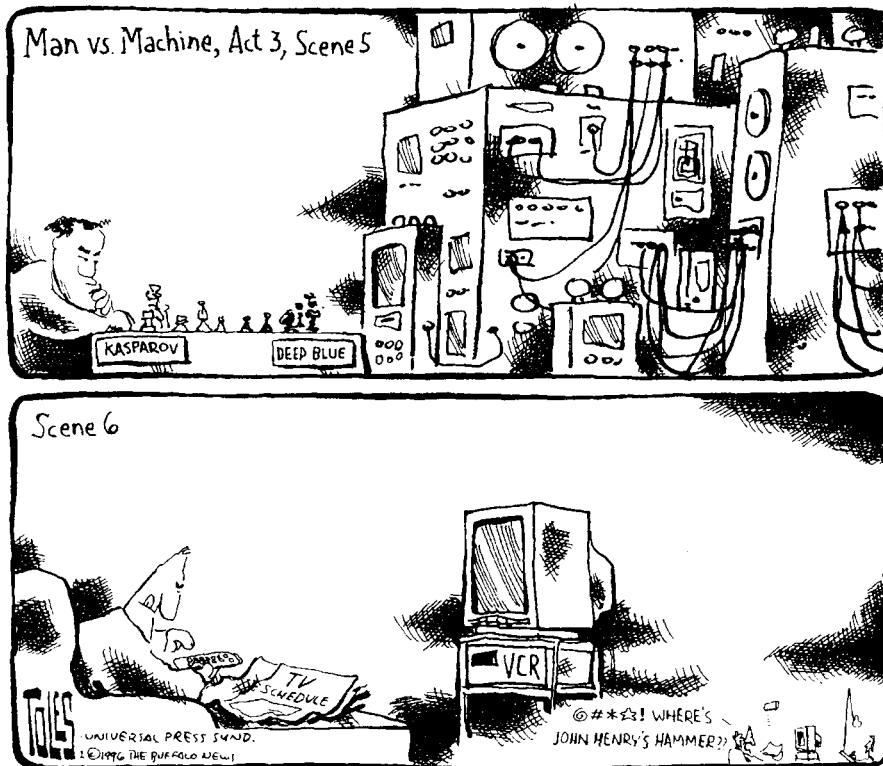
SIC TRANSIT: Until this week, Pat Buchanan's official campaign Web site displayed an article claiming that Vince Foster was murdered for being an Israeli spy in cahoots with Hillary Clinton.... After ignoring a reporter who asked whether he knew how much basic groceries cost, Lamar Alexander grabbed an aide and said: "I need to know the price of a gallon of milk and a dozen eggs, *now*." ... Because her husband's name is an unpronounceable symbol, the bride of The Artist Formerly Known as Prince pointed to a pendant bearing his insignia while taking her wedding vows.... Asked his opinion about the superstar rock band Hootie and the Blowfish, 93-year-old Republican Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina replied, "If they are from South Carolina, I'm sure they are competent."

HHEAD COUNT: As preoccupied with illegal immigration as Pat Buchanan is, you'd think he'd be an expert on the problem. You'd be wrong. On a single television program, the February 18 edition of ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley," Buchanan referred to "five million illegal immigrants coming into this country," then to "one, two, three million, invading the Southwest," and finally to "two million people walking across your border." In fact, the actual annual inflow of illegal migrants by air, sea and land is approximately 300,000, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service—hardly a pro-alien source. And the *total* number of illegal immigrants living in America is approximately 4.3 million—less than 2 percent of the population. Not only does Buchanan have no idea how much illegal immigration there is, he has no clue what causes it. In a single compound sentence during the February 15 Republican debate, he blamed the North American Free Trade Agreement both for exporting 300,000 jobs to Mexico and for promoting "soaring" illegal immigration. According to Buchanan, NAFTA is somehow simul-

taneously making it both easier and more difficult for a Mexican to find work at home. Obviously Buchanan's reasons for demonizing Mexicans are anything but rooted in fact. What they are rooted in we can scarcely imagine.

MINIMAL COMMITMENT: Pat Buchanan's rise is commonly attributed to his concern for the precarious position of American workers. "I plead guilty," he explained, in typically modest fashion, "to trying to protect the American worker." But catering to American workers' resentments isn't the same thing as trying to protect them. Buchanan rails against corporate profits, but doesn't seem to feel that the money should instead be going to employees. His line on raising the minimum wage—it "would cut off the bottom rungs of the economic ladder"—is identical to Phil Gramm's. ("Minimum wage laws tend to cut the bottom rung off the economic ladder.") He may actually believe this, but it's inconsistent with his protectionism; shutting off foreign trade raises the cost of labor, too, thus eliminating low-paying jobs just as he argues that the minimum wage does. Buchanan also opposed the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act, which lets employees take off unpaid time to tend to family crises. (So much for family values.) The only actual solutions to wage stagnation that Buchanan favors, in fact, involve punishing foreign workers. The anxious middle class would be no better off under a Buchanan administration, but at least it could take comfort—in a characteristically Buchanan-esque way—in knowing that others would be suffering, too.

AALEXANDER THE NOT-SO-GREAT: According to a 1991 Educational Testing Service report, in half of the states in the union wealthy school districts spend an average of 1.7 times as much per student as do poor school districts. In states where the inequality is greatest, Texas and Ohio for example, the average affluent



school district spends about 2.8 times as much as the poorest district. To correct these disparities, liberal education reformers have proposed funding school districts out of general state revenues instead of local property taxes. Lamar Alexander has a better idea. The former Secretary of Education (who now wants to abolish the department he headed) has come up with an answer for parents whose children attend poorly funded urban and rural schools: move. "Sometimes there'll just be better places to live than a place with low wealth and high needs," Alexander told *The New York Times*. "If you're living in an area with a bad school, you move to a place where there's a better school."

Now there's a thought—all the parents of school-age children in Harlem should just pick up and relocate to Westchester County, while their counterparts in South Central Los Angeles should simply find new lodgings in Beverly Hills. How the poor are going to afford houses in tony neighborhoods with the best schools has yet to be divulged by the would-be Education President. Stay tuned.



LOGROLLING IN OUR TIME: When it came time to select a reviewer for *Balkan Odyssey*, Lord David Owen's self-exculpating account of his failed diplomacy in Bosnia, *The New York Times Book Review* opted for Misha Glennly. A former BBC reporter, Glennly has made it his mission in life to correct those whose outrage at Serbian mass murder has obscured the Balkan complexities to which area experts like himself are exquisitely attuned. Owen must have been pleased: in his one-man crusade against moralistic naïveté, Glennly has relentlessly defended Lord Owen's sterile diplomatic handiwork, the 1993 Vance-Owen peace plan (VOPP). Unsurprisingly, Glennly used his *Times* review to absolve Owen of charges that he appeased the Serbs and to criticize Western leaders for not backing the VOPP. "[H]enceforth nobody can talk authoritatively about the course of this war without engaging [Owen's] text in detail," Glennly intones. What is left unsaid—since the famously fastidious *Times* apparently

failed to insist that Glennly disclose it—is that Owen's book itself asserts that no one can understand the Balkans without perusing the brilliant writings of ... Misha Glennly. "It was in many ways infuriating to watch and listen as the world's press and television concentrated only on Sarajevo and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Owen writes on page 52. "One ... exception was Misha Glennly, whose book, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, is the most outstanding account of the Serb-Croat war and required reading for any serious student." In case you missed this plug, Owen burbles on page 156 that "the atmosphere at this time is well caught in Misha Glennly's *The Fall of Yugoslavia*." That faint swishing you hear is the sound of one hand washing the other.

UNCONVINCING HITLER ANALOGY #612: "Here's a little parable about Lesser-of-Two-Evilism from Oregon, where, at one point in the U.S. Senate race between Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith, there was a green candidate called Lou Gold. Then, as the race came down to the wire, the

green establishment in Oregon told Gold that every vote counted and, if he stayed in, his third-party candidacy could throw the race to the man of darkness. So Gold stood down.... In the end Wyden beat Smith by 1.5 percent. The green vote put him over the top. Now he's saying that since he represents all the people of Oregon, including the chainsaw faction who voted for Smith, he wants to lay Oregon waste, the same way Smith promised. In the 1932 presidential election in Germany, the Social Democrats supported Field Marshall von Hindenburg against Hitler and the Nazis. In an article called 'Who's Going to Be the Lesser Evil in '68?' for a 1967 issue of *Independent Socialist*, Hal Draper recalled that election and wrote: 'So the Lesser Evil, Hindenburg, won; and Hitler was defeated. Whereupon President Hindenburg appointed Hitler to the chancellorship, and the Nazis started taking over ... the people voted for the Lesser Evil and got both....'—Alexander Cockburn, *The Nation*, February 26. •

THIRD PERSON

By Anna Husarska

There was something peculiar about his grammar. I realized what it was when he uttered the following sentence, about people who were dumped alive from planes into the sea every Wednesday in mid-1977: "When the number of those who had to be killed would build up, extra flights were made."

The Argentine Navy captain had killed, he told me, "roughly thirty people" in this way; "thirteen or so" on a regular Wednesday flight and "some seventeen" on an extra Saturday one. I spoke with him for one long afternoon in December, during which he managed never to use the form "I" or even "we" (as in "we, the Navy" or "we, the murderers"). Neither did he use the form "they." Instead, he zigzagged between several impersonal forms, so handy in the Spanish language, as he described the flights that took people held in the infamous Navy School of Mechanics (ESMA) to their deaths.

We were sitting in a small cell that the prison authorities in La Plata, a sleepy town forty miles southeast of Buenos Aires, had made available for our interview, perhaps the most unpleasant that I have ever conducted. Captain Adolfo Scilingo has been held here since April on fraud charges ostensibly unrelated to his thirty homicides. That he was locked up right after speaking out about the deaths was probably more than coincidence. But he was never charged with homicide and, if charged, would never be sentenced: he is protected by an amnesty called "the law of due obedience" proclaimed in 1987 by Raul Alfonsín, the civilian elected president after Argentina's military junta finally foundered on the shoals of the Falklands war.

The prison cell into which I was led through two sets of bars was furnished with two white plastic garden chairs and a dilapidated desk. The guard placed a jumbo-sized Coke and a couple of glasses on the desk, then he left, and Scilingo started to talk. He spoke for four hours, with only the occasional prodding word or two from me. From the start he went into detail about the procedure: he would drag political prisoners across the metal floor of the plane to the hole he was to push them through, and, though he wore sneakers, he almost fell through once himself. He said nobody ever looked down the hole because the flights were at

night; he said some of the prisoners defecated in the plane, so the crew used rubber gloves. To impress on me how small the plane was, Scilingo compared it to the cell we were sitting in and pointed to different corners, saying, "the two blond teenage girls were, like, there," or, "the young bearded man was, like, there." He didn't say "sitting there" because the political prisoners were given injections to render them unconscious before being "disappeared."

Staring into a corner of his cell, Scilingo recalled that the bearded man tried to stand up in the small plane but "had been quickly knocked down." The captain's graphic descriptions, reinforced by gestures around the room, made the scene come alive in front of my eyes. I could almost see, for instance, the pile of clothes on the plane—those to be killed were undressed to make eventual identification even more difficult—and the December heat seemed suddenly more oppressive.

Scilingo remembered that it was admiral Luis María Méndia who gave orders to employ this method of murdering inmates. In a 1976 speech Méndia said that since the Franco regime in Spain and the Pinochet regime in Chile had revealed the drawbacks of shooting political enemies (the corpses were sometimes unearthed) some other, more Christian, method had to be found. That's where the flights came in. As Méndia put it: "The subversives will be transported by plane, and not all will reach their destinations."

When Captain Scilingo first spoke publicly last March, it was almost eighteen years after his two flights. He said nothing new. Argentines by and large knew it all. During my last stay in the country, twelve years ago, I heard about the flights from my friend Gastón, whose brother is one of the so-called dirty war's disappeared (their number is estimated at 30,000 by human rights organizations and at 9,000 by the government). The human rights organizations have long tried to call attention to the practice; corpses have washed up on Uruguayan beaches. "Nunca Más" ("Never Again"), the final document of the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, says under the heading "Tossing Detainees to Sea" that "it is difficult to believe. And yet there are many documents that mention it." As Hebe de Bonafini, president of the Mothers from the Plaza de Mayo (who march every Thursday asking that those who disappeared their children be brought to justice), puts it: "I don't need Scilingo to tell me what happened."

Still, even with all this knowledge, the perpetrator's confession was a shock. And Scilingo provided concrete figures: 1,500 to 2,000 people were killed during the ESMA's flights (other branches of the armed forces and even the Coast Guard made similar flights).

For some time, the captain had been troubled by his memories of the flights: "One knew that one was doing something wrong, but one did not discuss it with others" (again that peculiar grammar). He knew that others in the Navy were required to make the flights, too, but he



Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Risky Business

How can we improve U.S. education? One answer that gets a lot of applause is to introduce some form of private enterprise. Some people call for vouchers—using public money to pay for children to attend private, and largely unregulated, schools. Others tout charter schools, which are set up under state law to be independent of state and local control though they are funded by public money. Either way, supporters say, we would bypass the regulation that is strangling education. And we'd create competition among schools, causing excellent schools to flourish, good, new schools to spring up, and bad schools to close—just the way it happens in the business world.

All this sounds good, but voucher programs are rare and charter school legislation is relatively new. So we haven't had a chance to test these confident assertions against real-life examples of how the market works. Now, though, we are beginning to get some striking evidence about the down side of market schools.

In Los Angeles, a charter school for troubled teenagers was closed last year by the district. According to stories in the *Los Angeles Times*, district funds were used to lease a \$39,000 sports car for the principal and pay for his private bodyguard. Expensive furniture was purchased for the administrative floors, and a "secret retreat" was held to the tune of \$7000. The district started investigating the school's finances when an auditor found a discrepancy between the number of students the school was claiming—and receiving payment for—and the number that appeared on the rolls. By the time the school closed, four teachers were left to teach more than 200 students, and there was \$1 million worth of unpaid bills. The school had a board of directors, but its members apparently did not pay much attention to how things were going with the students—or how the school district's money was being spent.

In Milwaukee, two schools in its voucher program for low-income students recently shut their doors, and, as I write, two more are in danger of closing. Competition? No, poor financial management, according to stories in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*. The principal at one of the failed schools was charged with passing \$47,000 worth of bad checks. The other school ran out of funds and was reportedly unable to pay its teachers for several weeks. The financial problems in all four schools, three of which were new this year, arose when they enrolled fewer students than they had counted on. An official in the state education department



Charter and voucher schools are the educational equivalent of small businesses.

said administrators of the new voucher schools could have used training in financial procedures and school administration but that legislation governing these schools did not permit his department to offer it.

No one should be surprised. These charter and voucher schools are the educational equivalent of small businesses. Many of them are new, and everybody knows that the failure rate for small businesses over the first several years is very high. (According to the Small Business Administration, 53 percent of small businesses fail within 5 years of starting up, 79 percent by the end of 10 years.) Failure is usually related to what has troubled these schools—financial problems and, often, lack of experience in running a business.

The difference is that when a small business fails, it's the owners who pick up the tab. When a voucher or charter school goes out of business, it is the taxpayers' money that is thrown away.

But the chief victims are the students; they are the ones who lose school time that cannot be replaced. John Witte, the evaluator for the Milwaukee voucher project, put it this way when a school closed during the first year of the experiment:

There are those who would argue that the failure of that school is to be expected in a market system of education. Whether one believes that that expectation outweighs the fact that approximately 150 children essentially lost a year's education is a value issue that we cannot resolve. Whatever one's values are, the price was high for those families involved.

The costs and implications of charter and voucher school failure do not stop here. Where do students go when their school has shut its doors? Must taxpayers also spend money to keep public school spaces for youngsters in voucher and charter schools in case there are school closings? If not, would we put them in classes that might already be filled to overflowing? Or send them to a school with available space, no matter where the school was located? Or should we make them wait in line until the following year—the way voucher and charter schools would do?

The people who want us to embrace vouchers and charter schools pretend that doing so is as easy as saying "free enterprise." The failures in Los Angeles and Milwaukee remind us that these ventures are risky—and that all the risk falls on people who have no influence over the outcome.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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kept the whole story to himself for seven years, then finally told his wife, Marcela. And when Scilingo resigned from the Navy in 1986, he started to write letters. To a high-ranking general ("Let us end the cynicism. Let us say the truth"); to President Carlos Menem, demanding that he, Scilingo, be allowed to testify before judges; and to his superiors, asking that they publish lists of the victims. A few months later, in another letter to his former superior, he wrote: "I was educated by the Naval Military School to be a Navy officer; in the ESMA I was ordered to act outside the law and was transformed into a criminal."

Not one of Scilingo's letters was answered. Then, in a Buenos Aires subway station in December 1994, he ran into Horacio Verbitsky, a journalist from the daily *Página 12*, whose openly leftist opinions were well known. Scilingo approached Verbitsky, and, once the initial distrust was overcome, the two spoke for many hours. Parts of those conversations are transcribed in Verbitsky's book *The Flight*, to be published in the U.S. in August. Scilingo is conscious of this incredible contradiction: "The first person to really understand me was someone who easily could have been my victim." But the relationship somehow worked: "If it were not for the way Verbitsky squeezed it all out of me, I would have had trouble saying all I said," Scilingo admits.

I visited Scilingo's wife to ask why she thought her husband went public with his confession. Marcela and the couple's four children (three daughters aged 17, 20 and 21 and a 15-year-old-son) live in a spacious apartment in the center of Buenos Aires, but she said they could be evicted at any moment because they can no longer afford the rent. She has a little business selling videos on religious and military subjects, but it isn't earning much (neither "The Bible" nor "Ten Commandments" nor "Famous Battleships" nor "Aircraft of All Times" is a big seller). Marcela thought that, on top of the accumulated remorse, what triggered Scilingo's urge to speak was the fact that their two oldest daughters had just reached the age of those two blond girls whom he pushed to their deaths.

Scilingo himself says that he confessed because he just couldn't take the guilt anymore and wanted to provoke some kind of cathartic reaction. Little did he know. The Navy commander, Enrique Molina Pico, didn't react at all. As for President Menem, he made disparaging remarks about Scilingo and announced that "those who have a bad conscience should confess to a priest, and the chapter is closed."

Yet Scilingo's March 1995 confession did have a powerful, if indirect, effect. A few weeks later, an Army sergeant, Victor Ibañez, spoke to a journalist from the daily *La Prensa*. He confessed that the Army had engineered flights in which it, too, disappeared political prisoners. He added that the officers who participated in the flights "are now big military chiefs."

This time the reaction came like thunder. The next day the Army chief, General Martín Balza, appeared on a popular TV program and read a statement in which

he said: "I assume our part of the responsibility for the errors of this conflict between Argentines that today moves us again." Admission of guilt? Atonement? Reconciliation? Not exactly.

Enter military intelligence, Captain Alfredo Astiz, Navy again. He, too, served at the infamous ESMA and, like his cohorts, avoided punishment in Argentina thanks to the due obedience law. Astiz, who is known as "the Blond Angel" for his cherubic appearance, was particularly despised by the human rights community because he had successfully infiltrated the Mothers from Plaza de Mayo. In his intelligence work, he played a direct role in the assassination of two French nuns in 1977 and participated in the arrest of a Swedish teenager, Dagmar Hagelin. A French judge has sentenced Astiz in absentia to life imprisonment, making him an officer who cannot go to war (or on peace missions) because the moment he crosses the border he would be arrested by Interpol. But in Argentina he is defended by the Navy Commander Molina Pico, who thinks that "Astiz possesses all the moral conditions to be a Navy officer."

Meanwhile Scilingo, hated by the Navy brass and by the families of the disappeared alike, anticipates his trial in La Plata. Since his confession he has tried to find out the names of his victims, hoping to lessen the pain of relatives desperate for news—even terrible news. He studied a photograph of an 18-year-old boy (probably killed on his second flight), but the photo was old, and he could not positively identify him. Then he was close to identifying a 65-year-old woman, but her family said that, when captured by the Navy commandos, she had lost her dentures, and he did not recall killing a toothless lady. This is how Adolfo Scilingo concentrates his mind as he awaits prosecution for unpaid debts. •

THE  PRESS

DEVROY'S CHOICE

By Matthew Miller

Under the existing rules of sourcing, reporters can't begin a story by saying: "The president's campaign manager called me today and, while shielding himself by saying 'This is on deep background,' planted rumors about his opponent that he and I both know are untrue."

—James Fallows, *Breaking the News*

On February 4, 1994, the Friday before the Monday on which the Clinton administration would unveil its fiscal 1995 budget, Ann Devroy of *The Washington Post* broke the story that the proposed budget would "kill" many

programs. Beneath the front-page headline "CLINTON TO PROPOSE ENDING 115 PROGRAMS IN '95 BUDGET," Devroy cited "documents obtained by *The Washington Post*." Though Devroy acknowledged in her lead that the cuts, which would save \$3.25 billion, were "a mere drop in the budget bucket," the *Post*'s headline and story placement sent an unmistakable message: "BIG CUTS COMING."

Over the next few days, other media outlets scrambled to respond to Devroy's "scoop." "CLINTON BUDGET KILLS 115 PROGRAMS, SLASHES OTHERS," announced *The Los Angeles Times* in its lead story the next day, before following up on Monday with a "news analysis" headlined "CLINTON '95 BUDGET BELIES SPEND IMAGE." Judy Woodruff told CNN viewers that Clinton's forthcoming budget was "one of the tightest fiscal proposals in memory," while Lou Dobbs grilled Laura Tyson on whether the cuts would fly politically. *Time*, caught near its deadline, followed Devroy's line, forecasting "plenty of pain" in a budget "even tougher than last year's," which had the Pentagon bracing for "draconian cuts." Though some reporters, notably Andrea Mitchell and Tim Russert of NBC, qualified their coverage (by explaining, for example, that entitlements were left untouched), the average American could be excused for misunderstanding some basic facts. Namely, that the new plan contained not a single cut beyond what was required by the Clinton deficit reduction budget enacted the year before; that the cuts (which scrapped behemoths like the bluefin tuna and shark research grants) amounted, altogether, to about four hours' worth of federal spending; and that the Defense Department's budget authority actually grew by \$3 billion, giving it more in real terms than cold warrior Richard Nixon had in 1975.

By conventional measures of journalism, the *Post*'s piece was a success: it beat the competition, set the tone for subsequent coverage and confirmed Devroy's reputation for the hustle that makes her a front-page regular. Yet the last laugh—as with dozens, if not hundreds, of such stories each year—belonged to the government officials who actually scripted the piece. The White House, under siege for a "big spending" health plan and its opposition to the previous fall's proposed Penny-Kasich cuts, wanted a budget reception that made the president look tough on spending. So it leaked Devroy the materials, manufacturing "news" that would help create the climate of opinion it desired.

Few Americans suspect that the nation's premier media institutions often act as de facto public relations flaks for government officials. The observation is not new; Mark Hertsgaard documented its apotheosis in the Reagan years in his important book, *On Bended Knee*. But, as James Fallows's fresh critique of the press, *Breaking the News*, argues, the days of "stenography" are not over. In the flurry of reviews now come and gone, the press focused mainly on Fallows's charge that "ce-

lebrity journalism" undermines the values of the trade. But, from my perspective as a newcomer to full-time journalism and a former White House aide, the more workaday question of how the habits and incentives of daily journalism continue to encourage this stenography seems considerably more important, especially at the dawn of a campaign.

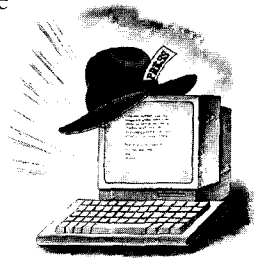
A close observer can lay out a veritable taxonomy of official leaks: the "sabotage" leak, through which losers in an internal debate try to poison the outcome; the "rivalry" leak, in which egos clash in print, often in code; the "self-aggrandizing" leak, at which James Baker was deemed an expert. Though the list is long and the issues each pose for the press are complex, I'm concerned with only one species here: the "transmission belt" leak.

Understanding what actually happens to create a "transmission belt" story like Devroy's means lifting the veil on a symbiotic subculture that Washington takes for granted, but the public never sees. White House officials contact Devroy and give her an exclusive look at parts of the forthcoming budget designed to show the administration in a favorable light.

If "news" is supposed to be about "what happened," that's what happened. But today's press won't tell that story. Instead, Devroy's piece compresses this transaction into the phrase "documents obtained by *The Washington Post*," a true but inadequate description that gives no account of the source's motive. The documents could have washed up on the beach.

A Nexis search suggests this is the *Post*'s phrase of choice for such situations. Devroy, for example, relied on "documents obtained by *The Washington Post*" to reveal the salaries of White House staff (July 1995), Bob Dole's draft of affirmative action legislation (June 1995) and a recent administration Medicare plan (December 1995). One of her colleagues, Clay Chandler, says he tries "to make a distinction between 'obtained by *The Washington Post*' and 'provided to *The Washington Post*'" if he feels he's "being spun on something." Either formulation completely hides the identity and motives of the source without which the information might not have been obtained. But it also assures that the reader has no chance of understanding what's really going on. To be fair, Devroy did note near the end of her budget story that "The White House is anxious to get out the message that this Democratic president is willing to make real cuts." But a buried nod to the "strategy" isn't the same as explaining how the story came to be and can't alter the impact of the misleading front-page play her editors provided.

What to do? These choices fall into the murky area called "news judgment," which is fraught with difficult calls. Reporters and editors invariably say their rule is to give readers as much context as possible when running leaked materials they deem newsworthy. But, even when the source permits this, there's a rub. "You can't



really say George Stephanopoulos called you aside and said this," says one reporter at a major daily who requested anonymity, as did most reporters interviewed for this piece for fear that editors would not want them to comment on these issues. (Yes, it's pathetic that I can't write about leaks without relying on anonymous quotes.) "You could say that 'spin doctors at the White House did this with this motive in mind,'" this reporter adds, "but then you wouldn't get stuff [from them] again. *You need to make a judgment on which is more important*" (emphasis mine). That is, the reporter and editor judge whether the reader's interest in understanding what's really happening today is more important than the reporter's interest in access to the source tomorrow.

These are subtle decisions, since the reader arguably benefits down the road from the reporter's continued access. But less wholesome incentives—like advancing the reporter's career and his paper's reputation—are also at work. "Newspapers love things that seem 'exclusive,'" says a reporter at a major paper. "If it's a confidential document that says 'it rained today in Washington,' it will get more play than if you looked out the window and wrote, 'It's raining today in Washington.' It becomes a form of hype, and reporters use it to get good play for their stories." Their editors may be similarly disposed. "The *Post* will overplay a story to send a message," says Andrew Rosenthal, Washington editor of *The New York Times*. "Like, 'We think this is really important because it's exclusive.'"

"I remember being embarrassed about that," Devroy says now of the budget piece. "I knew full well that what it amounted to was not a lot of money, that it was a symbolic act, a 'New Democrat' thing.... We overplayed it." Why? "The *Post* had something no one else had."

Was there an alternative? "The only thing you can fall back on," Devroy says, "is to decide that you're not going to put stuff in the paper until you've vetted it more.... They [the sources] know that, and you know they know—so you go around saying, 'You'll pay for screwing up my credibility if this is far off.' If people give you stuff that's far off, you have to hold them responsible in future dealings."

Does that mean the spoon-fed scoop comes at the expense of accuracy? "Look," says Devroy, "27.9 or 36.4 percent of what you're writing is not exactly right. You can't do daily newspapering without accepting that." "You're a newspaper," she adds, "not a news-magazine or a monthly. You just don't have the luxury of getting two accountants and a budget analyst" before running with something big.

If these constraints cause accuracy problems, Devroy says, the answer is to go back and fix them in subsequent pieces. But that's not always easy. "It's awkward for someone who gets sucked in in the first cycle [of an official story] and writes it wrong under their byline," says one reporter. "No one can say, 'Yesterday's headline was totally wrong.'" Devroy agrees. "You come

back and say, '[They've] ... put out a deceptive plan,' not, 'I'm too stupid to have gotten it right.'"

Officials can use a reporter's quest for exclusivity and the pressure of deadlines to their advantage. Eric Pianin of the *Post* got a call one day last September from a source he describes as "sympathetic to" Republican House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer. The source told Pianin that Archer was set to unveil scalebacks in corporate "welfare," a big switch from Archer's previous position. Pianin knew Archer's foot-dragging on corporate subsidies had drawn heavy criticism from Budget Chairman John Kasich and other budget hawks, especially when the GOP was asking Medicare beneficiaries to take a hit to balance the budget. An Archer reversal was big news.

The dilemma Pianin faced is the daily bread of journalism. "I wasn't privy to all the details," he says today. "Obviously it was very sketchy, and I didn't have the bill." Pianin saw it, reasonably, as "the most recent development in an ongoing struggle. It looked like Kasich had scored some points, and Archer was grudgingly coming around. I viewed it as news."

"You have to make a judgment late in the day," Pianin adds. "I guess I felt, in some ways, I was flying blind. What I was getting was a selective version of what ultimately emerged. But I viewed it as a major budgetary development.... Yeah, I wish I'd seen the whole thing."

The *Post*'s page-one headline on September 14 read, "BUSINESS TAX BREAKS TARGETED; KEY HOUSE CHAIRMAN SHIFTS ON \$30 BILLION IN LOOPHOLES." Pianin's piece spoke of Archer's "sudden turnabout" and referred to "sources familiar with Archer's thinking." As with Devroy's piece, Pianin did not discuss the source's motives or describe the transaction that produced this "news." In the days after, it became clear that the plan contained far less than met the eye; it was ridiculed subsequently (in the *Post* among other places) for counting cuts in the Earned Income Tax Credit and license for modified pension raids as "cuts in corporate welfare."

Rather than go with the spoon-fed version, why didn't the *Post* wait? "It's the nature of the beast," Pianin says. "I didn't have the luxury of writing for a magazine or periodical.... I work for a daily newspaper." But Archer's "friend" wasn't warning Pianin about the Oklahoma City bombing; he was spinning a misleading story to make the chairman look good. The Republic would have survived the extra day it took to steer past the official line.

Of course, Pianin and Devroy do much good work; these pieces illustrate the risks even the best reporters face. *The New York Times* offers examples as well—including Robert Pear's string of front-page scoops on the Clinton health plan, which repeatedly cited "confidential work papers" without further context. It's not that official leaks comprise the bulk of "news" or that reporters who unearth confidential materials don't often deserve kudos. But anyone who's served in government knows that both parties

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devote enormous energy to media manipulation. Given the influence the *Post* and *Times* have on the rest of press coverage, it's not unfair to expect them to be especially vigilant about being "used." What might that mean?

Disclose motives. Jason DeParle of the *Times* routinely tells readers what a source is grinding. (Note: DeParle edited two pieces I wrote for *The Washington Monthly* in 1989 and is a friend.) Take a typical DeParle welfare piece from April 1994, which broke "news" of an internal administration memo that showed that the costs of its welfare plan were soaring. DeParle noted that "the document was provided to *The New York Times* by a person who argues that the money for the welfare changes could be better spent on other programs for low-income Americans." "I think that's terrific," says Devroy of DeParle's approach, which I found no example of her following. "We're pressed frequently to do that more here, and we don't. It's just daily slovenliness when we don't. . . . We've got trillions, zillions and gazillions of words flowing out of this place every day. An editor sitting down at 7 p.m. with 500 stories won't say, 'We need a better source on this.'"

Term limits for White House reporters. Editors agree that becoming a captive of your sources is Washington journalism's biggest occupational risk. Why not assure it can't happen by rotating reporters at regular intervals—especially at the White House, where the risk of "transmission belt" leaks will always be highest? Steve Brill, the *American Lawyer*/Court TV chief who's a fanatic on press ethics (and supplied several of these suggestions), says that if he ran the *Post* or the *Times*, no one would have the White House beat for more than six months. "I'd never want to employ a reporter who's more interesting at a dinner party than they are in print." Brill elaborates, "That means they're not telling readers what they know to avoid burning sources." Ann Devroy has covered the White House for the *Post* since 1989 (and before that for Gannett from '81 to '85).

Headline approval. Devroy's budget story contained some caveats; the headline and story placement created the problem. Going for the big splash is the editors' choice. Requiring reporters to sign off on headlines, while not always feasible, would help increase accountability and restrain the editor who pumps a piece beyond its facts.

"At presstime." Why couldn't Pianin say that "Archer's plan appeared to do such-and-such, but at presstime the details were very sketchy." This is, after all, what Pianin told me. Together with disclosing the source's motive, a commitment to level with readers about what isn't known might have led the *Post* to hold the piece.

In the end, maybe that's the best way to serve readers and avoid the risk—or temptation—of being "transmission belts" for public officials. If the press had to disclose the interaction that got them the story, and the vital but ascertainable information which the story doesn't contain, would it still run the piece? The Pentagon Papers will always pass that test. "Exclusives" ladled out by officials—or campaign aides—won't. •

Why Alexander doesn't beat Clinton.

ADBC

By Matthew Cooper

The Republican primary now looks a lot like Bosnia before Richard Holbrooke showed up—a bloody three-front war with no clear winner. No wonder the candidates were cautious as the New Hampshire primary results unfolded. When Lamar Alexander aide Dan McLagan told the governor that he was tied in the exit polls, Alexander barely reacted. When Buchanan's New Hampshire press secretary, Mike Biondo, was doing a TV interview after the networks had declared his man the leader, Buchanan whispered into his earpiece, "Biondo, don't declare victory."

As if to reassure himself, each candidate offered a body count. Alexander said Dole was dead; Dole called it a two-man race. And Buchanan, with élan, promised to "bury two bodies" in Arizona's Monument Valley when the desert primary rolls around. Both Alexander and Dole say they can stop Buchanan. Each keeps triangulating. Dole is on the air in South Carolina with ads blasting Alexander as "A Tax And Spend Liberal. . . . Who's Not What He Pretends To Be" and radio spots condemning Buchanan for his "condescending and demeaning attitude towards women." For his part, Alexander is fighting a two-front war—repeating that Dole has "no ideas," and Buchanan has the "wrong ideas." Which of the two can roll back Radovan Buchanan's siege of the party? I'd bet on Dole.

Look at the calendar. It works against Alexander. The Alexander crew was hoping for a Dole collapse in New Hampshire. They didn't quite get it. So now the plan is to husband resources, avoid a full-scale engagement in the February 27 Arizona primary and bank heavily on the South Carolina primary on March 2. But Dole has the state wired. Lee Atwater lives. The late Bushie created a GOP behemoth, and now it's behind Dole. What's worse for Alexander, Buchanan's been 200-proof strong in South Carolina. He mocks Shannon Faulkner, the erstwhile pathbreaker at the Citadel. And he never misses an opportunity to play the race card: harping on the repeal of the Voting Rights Act's special provisions for the South, the preservation of the state's Confederate flag and the Bob Jones court decision barring tax exemptions for segregated schools. And South Carolina is textile-rich, perfect for Buchanan's trade pitch.

Alexander allies think Buchanan's Wallace-esque

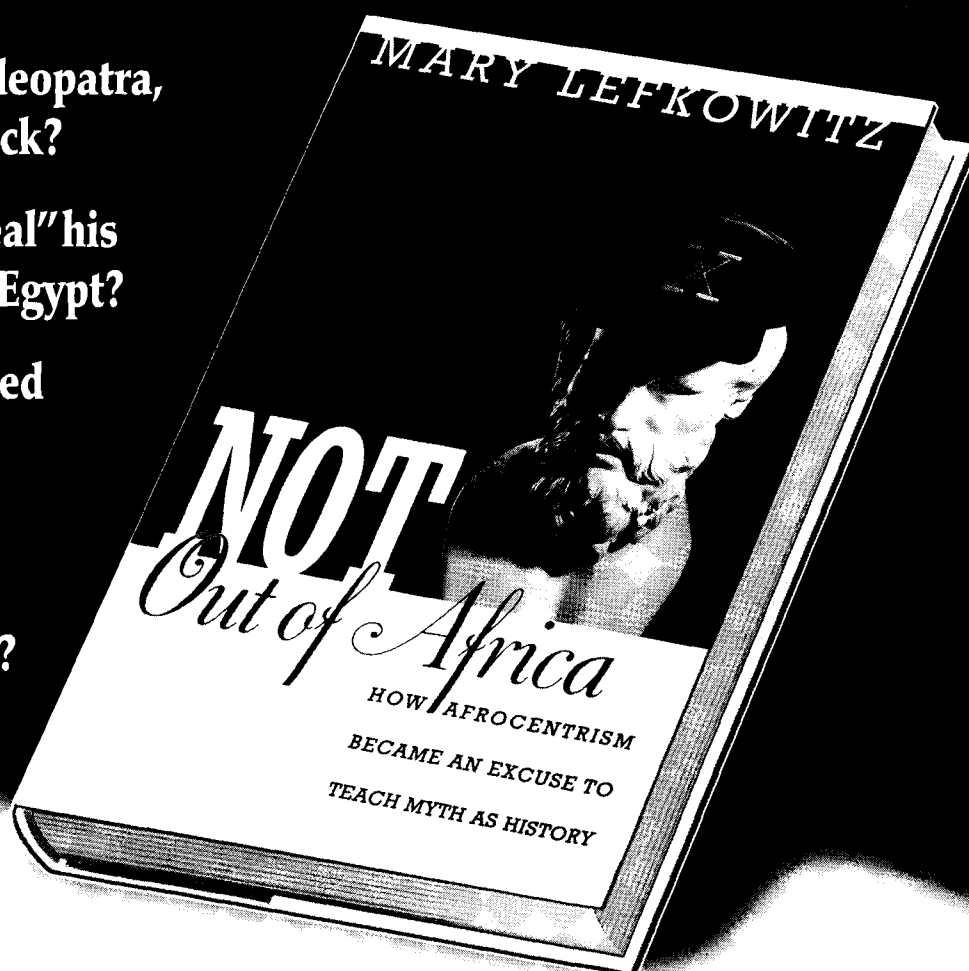
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rhetoric won't play in a 1990s South Carolina that manufactures and exports BMWs. "The paleo-South is the wrong way to talk to the South these days," says Alexander supporter and former Education Secretary Bill Bennett. Yes—but if Alexander and Dole play hard, Buchanan wins and Alexander blows his chance for a big Southern victory. After South Carolina, Alexander will go for the March 5 primaries in New England and in Georgia, which gets some Tennessee television but where Buchanan took home almost 37 percent of the vote in 1992. Then the real psychodrama will unfold as Dole, George Bush's nemesis, courts Jeb and George W. Bush and their megastates, Florida and Texas. "Texas has opened up. There will be a mad rush there," says top Alexander strategist Mike Murphy. In Florida, Alexander has a decent shot thanks to Jeb Bush's former campaign manager, Sally Harrell. By this time, though, he could be far behind Dole and Buchanan in delegates.

Other problems daunt Alexander. His ABC gimmick—Alexander Beats Clinton—still isn't convincing. It's been widely reported that the White House is afraid of Alexander. That's only partly true. Al Gore, in the words of one of his pals, is "scared shitless" of his decades-long rival. But others in the Clinton entourage aren't so ruffled. They see in Alexander someone who's trumped by Clinton; the former Tennessee governor, they figure, is just a blander, dimmer version of their guy. Alexander snipes at Clinton for having a mid-life crisis in public. But Clintonites see the president's emotionalism differently. They think of Alexander as Clinton without the Elvis, all of Clinton's preternatural ambition without his raspy voice, policy smarts and gargantuan appetite for human contact. Think of Alexander as President McLarty—that's Mack McLarty, the president's gracious but innocuous former chief of staff.

Indeed, the temptation to compare the two Southerners, Alexander and Clinton, is irresistible. But it's a comparison that may, as Clinton's staffers believe, favor Clinton. Both were active in Boys Nation. Both were elected governor in 1978. Both took on the teachers' unions in their respective states and devoted their energies to economic development. Both seem to have made money through connections not available to the average Bubba.

But the similarities end there. Alexander, a Presbyterian product of the Republican mountains of East Tennessee, is reserved. Clinton, the Baptist son of drinking-and-gambling Hot Springs, is expansive. Think of Alexander tickling a gentle "Tennessee Waltz" on the ivories while Clinton blows "Heartbreak Hotel" on the sax. The difference is apparent on the stump, too. In 1992, on the day his "thank you for saving me from the draft" letter came out, Clinton grabbed everyone he could and vowed, in the most passionate speech of his life, that he would stand by

New Hampshire " 'til the last dog dies." When the monochromatic Alexander finished his campaign with a walk to the sea in Portsmouth he offered only a repetition of his stump speech.

Alexander's other hindrance is his oft-repeated claim to new ideas. Some are intriguing enough, like his support of Senator Dan Coats's plan to promote tax credits for charities. But others fall flat. His idea for a new branch of the military to police the borders for drugs and illegal immigrants seems unnecessary. Alexander hasn't said what he'd call this force, although I'm hoping it's either the Narco-rines or the Borderettes. Plaid uniforms, of course.

It's also hard to see how Alexander's hyper-federalism is a winning idea. Alexander wants to throw everything back to the states. The Brady bill? Alexander says toss it out; he wants gun laws decided at the local level. He'd kick abortion legislation back to the states, too—although he won't say how he'd overturn *Roe v. Wade* to allow that to happen. The problem is that devolution—a term that Alexander avoids—remains an idea with limited applicability. Obviously, there ought to be laboratories of democracy. But Alexander ignores the fact that some functions of government are better handled by central authority. Pollution control, for instance, needs to be federalized lest businesses have to comply with a crazy quilt of local standards. Lamar, though, would throw most environmental rules back to the states.

Sure, Dole is weak. He's still mumbling about "leadership." When he mounted the dais in Manchester after Buchanan's win he had the makings of a great, indignant speech. "I've been a Republican all my life," he said. The next line could—should—have been an impassioned melding of message and biography, something like: "... And Bob Dole won't let his party—our country—be brought down by wrong-headed ideas. The last time we tried isolationism, Bob Dole left a piece of himself. Millions perished."

Dole, though, accustomed to having silence imposed by a chairman's gavel before he speaks, seemed flustered, fazed by the Motley Crüe of rowdy frat-boy Republicans his staff put on the stage with him. Too bad. If Dole can find his "last dog dies" moment he will have a pretty good shot at being president. The media will fawn. The mainstream GOP will breathe a sigh of relief. And remember: Dole's strengths are Clinton's weaknesses, his mumbling a reassuring contrast to Clinton's slickness. Naomi Wolf, the feminist author, has urged Clinton to portray himself as "the good father." That's nuts. If Clinton's a relative, he's Roger—a ne'er-do-well, strapped for cash, borrowing money. But it's not bad advice for Dole. Unlike Alexander, with his plaid, his exclamation mark and his endless gimmicks, Bob Dole really could be the Good Father, the steady soldier who fought fascism, recaptured his party and stood down Pat. •

CRYING WITHOUT TEARS

By Michael Lewis

February 15:

It's an hour before the final New Hampshire debate. I thought that by arriving early I might sneak into the back of the studio with the candidates or, at any rate, find some way to avoid the sensory deprivation chamber where they stuff the journalists. I was out of luck. Already, the candidates are safely inside, Morry Taylor's Land Yachts hog all available parking, the police haul away thugs and a phalanx of guards blocks the front door of the television station. The perhaps 400 demonstrators in the dark snow drifts are the loudest and, seemingly, the most scary yet; look closer and you can see that it is just a bunch of kids holding signs that say "BALANCE THE BUDGET."

The first rule of campaign journalism is to look as if you belong where you don't; and so I summon a false sense of entitlement and stride through the glass doors of the television station. Alas, within seconds I am surrounded by cops, who drag me before a man with a wire coming out of his ear and a woman holding a clipboard. I had to say something so I said, absurdly, "I have an urgent message for Morry Taylor." But before they have time to throw me back out into the snow the doors blow open and New Hampshire Senator Bob Smith, pretending not to regret endorsing Phil Gramm, marches through, together with Jim Courtovitch, Gramm's campaign manager. I say hello to Jim, who in the spirit of democratic politics has forgiven me for writing nastily about his boss. ("I had to explain to him what a foot masturbator was," he says, spinning even in the grave.) It's easy for him to be magnanimous; he has had many job offers since Gramm withdrew from the race. Go bankrupt in business, and you are a pariah. Go belly up in politics, and you are hot property. The cops let him pass.

But something good has happened. Having seen me shaking hands with a bigwig, the woman with the clipboard is much less inclined to chuck me out into the snow. We chat. Each candidate is allowed only five staffers, she explains sadly, and so if there are five with Morry Taylor I am out of luck, no matter how urgent my message. I bluff: Morry came with only four, I say, he's waiting for me. She checks the guest list. Amazingly, I'm right.

Upstairs is indeed the inner sanctum of Republican

presidential politics: the candidates, their aides and a handful of ABC's biggest clients. The only two journalists are Tim Russert of "Meet the Press" and Howard Fineman of *Newsweek*, both of whom have the air of men who have been invited. The candidates are enclosed in glass offices with their five advisers. Richard Lugar is writing out his remarks longhand; Lamar Alexander is scheming; Morry is drinking a glass of red wine and reciting into a dull beige wall. As usual Bob Dole has the biggest space and the special privileges: all the political bigshots who have endorsed him—Governors Weld, Merrill, Branstad, etc.—have been let in with their guests, too. The Dole people try to create a sanctum within the sanctuary. They rope themselves off from the other candidates.

The debate lasts ninety minutes and, while it is no doubt tedious to anyone who hasn't followed the eight remaining candidates, it is the highest entertainment for those few of us who have. It's like watching a B movie: everyone remains in character. Bouncing up and down like a Puerto Rican shortstop, Lamar lashes into Dole while at the same time decrying negative advertising; Steve Forbes lashes into Lamar about his personal finances, prompting Lamar to lash back; Pat Buchanan lashes into "Mister Greenspan and Mister Rubin," thus creating job opportunities for anti-anti-Semites; Morry lashes into the English language. Between Morry's brain and Morry's mouth all manner of strange events occur; for instance, "practicality" becomes "pracality." In the space of five minutes he is capable of referring to himself as a "country pumpkin," or claiming that he bought his wife a "Norman Mailer dress" or speaking soaringly of America as "that shining city in the sky."

Dole for his part mutters disconnected phrases in response to the attacks on him from all sides. He treats the event as he treats the press and the voters—as an undignified distraction from his lifelong quest for the White House. "It's an abomination," a Dole aide later tells me, "that Bob Dole has to share a platform with Morry Taylor." But it's worse than that: Dole has arrived at the point where he needs Morry to defend him. "Senator Dole," Morry says in his closing remarks, "he's been a champion, a good old warhorse for the Republican Party. He's taken all the blows they whack at him

tonight." Good old Morry.

The debate produces one memorable moment, when Dole waves a few snapshots and tries to make a joke of Steve Forbes's advertising about him. "They didn't even use a good picture of me," Dole says, "so Steve, I brought some pictures. So if you are going to use negative ads—"

"Senator, no pretty picture can get around what you've done on taxes," replies Forbes.

"Yeah, yeah. I know your problem," says Dole. "You've got a lot of money. You're trying to buy this election."

The joke's gone sour; Dole's gone sour; there is an awkward moment when Dole fumbles the snapshots with his left hand to Bob Dornan on his right, who passes them on to Forbes, who doesn't even bother to look at them. The biggest winner is B-1 Bob Dornan, who now produces a foot-high blowup of himself holding his grandchild. The timing is so perfect that it looks planned, but it is a stroke of pure luck—Dornan had no idea Dole was going to turn up with pictures. Like all the luck in this campaign, it isn't Dole's. You know you have hit bottom when you are successfully parodied by Bob Dornan.

As the debate winds down, we the elect are led downstairs to the studio, together with George Stephanopoulos, who is on hand to answer for the president. We enter the room with the candidates as the final insults hurtle through the air. Amid the confusion there are a couple of things worth noticing. One is the alacrity of the Alexander people. They rush in like an Indy 500 pit crew, clean away the notes Alexander has taken at the podium and sweep him away in a concerned flutter. That man is handled! The other point of interest was all the stuff the candidates left behind on their desks; even the Alexander people permitted a piece of paper on which the candidate had scribbled notes to flutter to the ground. It said:

Let people decide Best ever Forb dull

As if to retaliate, Forbes left behind a war of chicken scratches, which read in part:

Taxes-flat. Confidence Flat tax. Alex-s Flat tax-business
Alexander # tax

Which about summed up their jousting war for third place. But as George Stephanopoulos licked his chops like the Cowboys before a Super Bowl and prepared to tell the world that Bill Clinton was not complacent and that he was taking this very seriously, I noticed the photographs. They lay on the shelf beneath Forbes's podium. They were not prints but originals, curled and soiled, as if they have been sitting in some shoebox for years until Dole stumbled across them late one night while he was worrying about how to retaliate against Steve Forbes in the big debate. Two are color: a bad one of Liddy, stunning in the flesh, looking tired and plain; a better one of Dole's dog, Leader, rubbing noses with a

yellow lab (see page 24). The third is a black and white of Dole smiling broadly and holding a baby. He looks twenty years younger. The black pen he clutches to keep his right arm in place juts up and is set off by the baby's white gown (see cover). Dole is looking at the camera; the baby is looking at Dole's gnarled, wounded hand.

February 16-18:

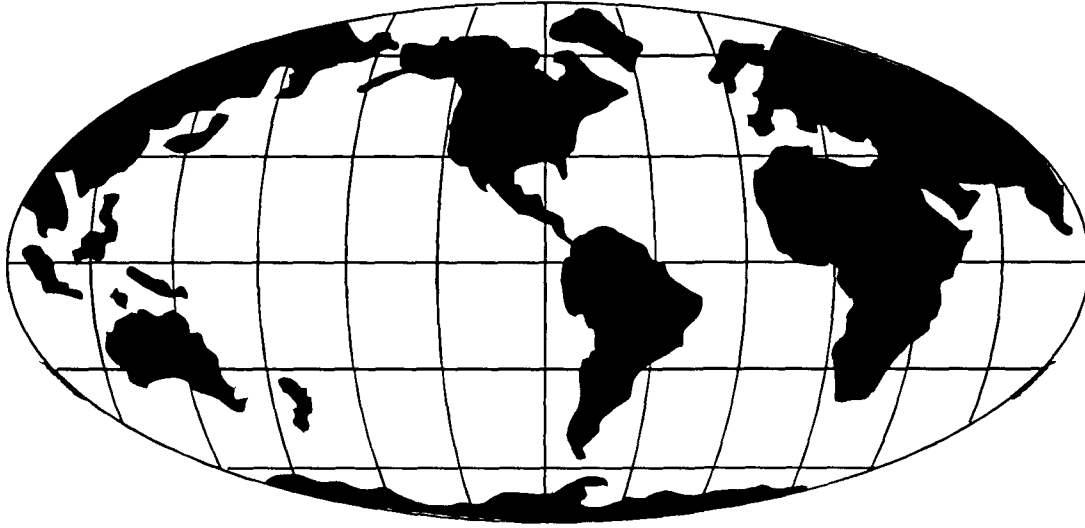
I ask five different Dole aides the identity of the baby held by Dole in the photograph he gave to Forbes. It seems an innocent enough query—after all, this was the picture Dole had selected for publication. I get no answer. The basic pose of the Dole campaign is the less anyone finds out about their candidate the better. You can spot the Dole office in the row of glass boxes on the ground floor of the Holiday Inn: it's the one with newspaper taped up on the glass to prevent people from looking in. Dole himself remains largely out of sight: he makes two or three very brief appearances each day and is otherwise unavailable for interviews.

Dole's speeches add nothing to the general blank picture. A dozen times I listened to his talk, pen poised idly over paper. Nothing. Not a thought, not an image, not a quote. It took me awhile to figure out why this was, but then it struck me: Bob Dole wasn't running for president. The *concept* of Bob Dole was running; the man himself had subcontracted out all the dirty work to people who make their careers out of this sort of thing. That was why he was referring to himself in the third person. He wasn't there, at least not in any meaningful way.

It turns out that everything I will discover about Bob Dole I will discover by stealth. My first discovery: he's embarrassed by his own vanity. I catch him in a back room at one event just before he's about to go on stage. He thinks no one is looking. He checks out his reflection furtively—his hair is sprayed and dyed—and then whips out of his pocket a tiny canister and squirts two quick blasts of breath spray into his mouth. His wit is also genuine; it's not just an act. I stalk him through the snow at the world dog-sledding championship and watch him meet and greet the pooches. A schoolgirl approaches him as he's about to leave and, after nabbing a photo, asks him if he's had fun. "You learn a lot out here campaigning," Dole says, motioning to a sled of twenty dogs. "They're all nice dogs, too. Not like the Congress." He thinks no one is listening. He said it just for the fun of it.

All other data about Bob Dole must be inferred from the world he has created around himself. The Dole campaign consists of slick young men in blue suits forever whispering to each other in dark corners. The campaign pays top dollar for everything, and I get the feeling that most who work for it have some personal financial stake in Dole soldiering on and that they'll be the last to tell him that really he shouldn't be doing this again. You also get the feeling that there is very little the campaign would not do. One of their favorite tech-

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niques has been to hire telemarketing firms to call Buchanan supporters and, in the guise of pollsters, relate damning untruths. (Why not? It worked on Forbes in Iowa.) In response to Buchanan's complaints, the Dole people tell reporters that Buchanan is doing the calling to a few of his supporters to tar Dole.

It takes a special sort of credulity to believe them. I stopped half a dozen people carrying Buchanan signs who told the same stories of strange phone calls in the night. One afternoon I abandoned the Dole campaign for the steam room at the Manchester YMCA to purge myself of the dreadful feeling coming over me. A few minutes later an extremely fat old man waddles in, spies me, drops his towel and sits on a plastic stool right next to me. "You're a new face," he says, "I always notice a new face." I say *that's nice, grab for a towel and tell him I came for the campaign.* He shifts on his stool and says, "I'm a Buchanan man, myself." (Buchanan men are the kind of guys who can sidle up to other guys in steam rooms without the slightest fear of being thought gay.) Moments later he's complaining about the calls he's been getting at home. Here, roughly, is what he said:

A guy calls. He says, "Hi, my name is William, and I'm calling from the Dole campaign. Are you aware that Pat Buchanan is an extremist?" And I say: "Whadaya mean?" And he says, "Pat wants to give nuclear weapons to South Korea and Japan." So I ask him: "Where does this information come from?" He says he doesn't know. So I ask him: "What does Bob Dole think about that?" And this kid doesn't know that, either. He knows absolutely nothing about Bob Dole. So I ask: "Who are you anyway?" And he says he's with an organization called the National Research Institute in Houston. So I ask him for his phone number. And he says he can't give it to me. Then he hangs up.

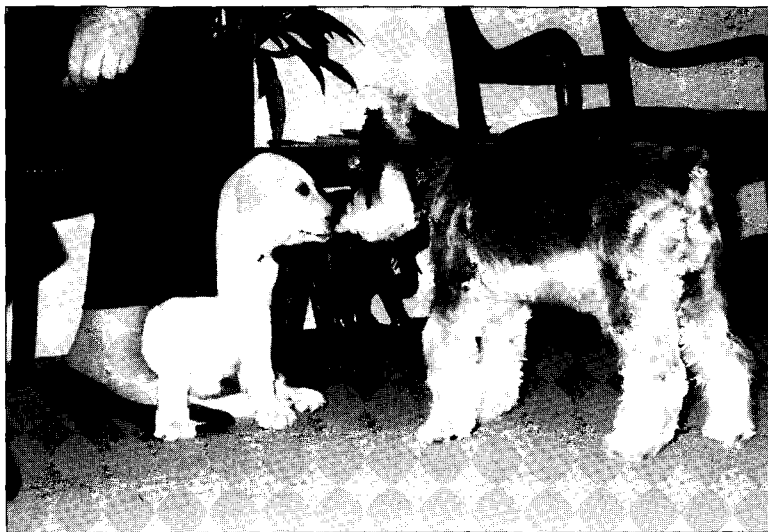
There is, of course, no listing in Houston for the National Research Institute.

In short, the Dole campaign is a lot like what a lot of people probably suspect the Buchanan campaign is: closed, secretive, smug, a bit nasty. Maybe that's what happens when you lose once too often: you stop trusting the voters. By contrast, the Buchanan campaign is open, honest, friendly and helpful. Buchanan has campaigned honorably with a decent respect for the process. He has put himself before the press and been very open about what he believes. On the other hand you can only afford to campaign dirty if no one expects you to.

And yet I still want badly to like the man; I'll bet Dole

is the guy in the race that people most badly want to like but can't quite figure out how to do it. Every night after a day with Dole I return home and recall to my mind a pair of mental pictures that the day has badly blemished. The first is the one of Dole recuperating from his war wounds as described by Richard Ben Cramer: hanging by his bad right arm and trying to straighten it out until he was sweating and crying from the pain. The second is a windy afternoon last June in a graveyard on the French coast, when Dole says he realized he had to run for president one last time. I had traveled there on Clinton's plane to witness the D-Day celebrations, but about halfway through I lost interest in writing about it and just started watching. You gazed down the cliff on the beach and just marveled: how did these men do this? Just before Clinton addressed the veterans of the Normandy invasion I found myself walking alone through the rows of white crosses until I reached a place where

there was no one else but a pair of veterans. They seemed ancient though, of course, they could not have been much older than Bob Dole. They were trembling and leaning on each other as they looked down on a cross, and at first I thought it was just from the strains of age. Then I saw the name and place on the cross: Stenson (I'll say) from Mississippi; the boy had died at the age of 19 on the first day of the inva-



BOB DOLE'S DOG, LEADER, AND FRIEND

sion. The old men wore name tags, too.

Stenson from Mississippi. Two of three brothers had survived that day. They were crying without tears.

That's a bit like Dole, I would like to believe. He is crying without tears. He has the emotions, or at least you can sense them lurking inside him, but he has no idea how to give them proper expression.

Dole's February 19:

A rally at the Town Hall in Milford on the eve of what may be Dole's final New Hampshire primary. A large crowd has gathered outside the red brick fort, but, as usual, half of it consists of journalists and Buchanan supporters there to dance on the grave. This evening the local fire marshal, who has somehow gotten involved, is allowing only a relative handful into the hall to hear Dole speak. The rest will have to stand in the snow and the dark and stare into the bluff façade of the Town Hall, from which Dole's voice is piped. But, just when they shut the door for the last time and say no one else will be let in, a pair of bigfooting journalists cuts through the crowd. Robert Novak climbs the steps

with Jonathan Alter right behind. The crowd and the fire marshal part for Novak, and the large wooden door opens for just long enough to let him through. Then, bam! The gates of paradise shut fast in Alter's face.

"What are you doing?!" wails Alter. "Bob Novak and I were together."

The fire marshal stonewalls him.

"I'm from *Newsweek*!" shouts Alter.

The chief seems even less impressed, but Alter wants to get in more than the chief wants to keep him out. Invoking *Newsweek* and Novak he finally gets in ... and then out again. Like just about every other journalist he has concluded that nothing is to be gained from watching Dole in the flesh.

The act, I should say, is always the same. The announcer brings on stage one at a time all the politicians who have endorsed Dole; they race out onto the stage like ballplayers before a game. Dole waits in the background until the crowd reaches a low fever pitch. A quick squirt of the breath spray and he's on. He stands at the podium with his left foot and left side jutted forward, though he is right-handed. His crippled right hand rests on the podium, but it's not a prop. He'll start in with something self-deprecating: "That's a lot better than the speech is going to be," something like that.

Presently the voice of Dole emanates from the Town Hall's façade. It's not so much a speech as a series of disconnected phrases uttered in an elegiac tone, some of which cause the people around me to break out into giggles. ("Like everyone else in this room I was born.") A Dole speech sounds like the sort of thing a red brick building would say if a red brick building could speak. He pulls the rhythms of his One America refrain up short just as it starts to flow.

"We're not rich, we're not poor, we're not urban, we're not rural, we're not black, we're not white, uh—you can go on and on and on and on."

I have a dream, kind of. And gentleman in England now abed ... well ... I dunno ... maybe they should get up.

It is more like the Cliff Notes of a Great Speech than the speech itself. The only lines Dole can deliver with any kind of strength sound like they were cribbed from *Robert's Rules of Order*: "Start the hearings. Go through the process. Do it in an orderly way." The whole time Dole is speaking, it is as if he is saying: *This is the speech I would give you if I was the sort of person who gives speeches.* I'm not sure whether Dole is actually modest or simply embarrassed by immodesty.

I leave thinking that a man like this runs for the presidency not because he thinks he should be president. He thinks no one else should be president, so it might as well be him. But before I do, I land in trouble again.

Normally I don't argue with the supporters. There's no point—their views are their identity. Nothing you can tell even the most phlegmatic follower of Dick Lugar will shake his faith in his man; it will only make him think worse of you. And so I should have known better than to

open my trap at the back of a crowd in Milford; but I was tired, the hour was late. "If Clinton had been 19 in 1941 he would have been a war hero, too," I said to a pair of old men wearing Dole stickers. "And if Dole had been 19 in 1969 he would have found a way to avoid the war." What had been until then a pleasant conversation turned sour. There was no place here for a heretic; but if not here and now, where and when?

Buchanan's February 19:

I skip an early Dole event to go with Buchanan. I assume that if I feel this way a lot of voters must, too. But following Buchanan is suddenly not so easy, unless of course you want to ride on the press bus. With a pair of fellow scribes I whip out of the parking lot in my Nissan Pathfinder and immediately come upon a minivan parked in an alleyway. A strangely familiar hand karate chops out of the passenger window. Buchanan! He's making some point to an enterprising journalist who has caught him ducking out of the back of the hotel. My colleague James Bennet of *The New York Times* races out to catch the exchange. "Is it true that you said that Hitler was a man of courage?" asks the English journalist. Buchanan just breaks out into delighted laughter. We start out right on his tail, but soon there are about six other cars filled with TV crews and photographers speeding past us in the emergency lane, competing to suck Buchanan's exhaust. Crazy people, willing to risk life and limb on the off chance that Buchanan stops at Dunkin' Donuts.

Buchanan is meant to tour a lumber mill an hour or so north of Manchester, but the bubble effect prevents it from happening. About 150 journalists make it impossible for Buchanan to have his factory tour, and so after about five minutes we end up standing in the snow while he answers the questions posed by the pushiest journalists. "Capital Gang" satellites circle the fringe of the crowd while their star shines. There's Margaret Carlson! There's Robert Novak! And ... Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington! Picasso's biographer! Inside a lumber mill!

But maybe the strangest sight is the half dozen forlorn Japanese and Koreans perched on piles of logs trying to overcome their height disadvantage and get a clean shot of the man who plans to stick a wrench in global trade. Alone off to one side of the logs stands a South Korean version of Sam Donaldson, reciting to himself what he is about to say to the camera. "Did you know," I ask him, after introducing myself, "that Pat Buchanan wants to give South Korea nuclear weapons?" He looks surprised: "For free?" he asks. So far as I know, I say. He turns excitedly and tells it to his camera: tomorrow South Korea will know, too.

Just when I'm about certain that there is no voter in the teeming peristaltic mass swirling around Pat, a bearded man in a hat grabs me and doesn't ask but says, "You're from THE NEW REPUBLIC." I agree. He introduces himself as a fan of both Pat and Marty Peretz. The lone human bridge between this

continued on page 28

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LINCOLN

What A Luxury Car Should Be

magazine and Pat Buchanan is a rabbi.

February 20:

It was nearing midnight when I walked across the tarmac alone with Scott Mackenzie, the treasurer of the Buchanan campaign. We were both early for the flight to Mount Rushmore. There was something strange: the plane was big. Coming out of Iowa, after Buchanan shocked everyone, he had with him only about twenty journalists. Back then he flew commercial because the campaign didn't have the money to charter a plane. Yet here waiting on the tarmac was a 124-seater, bought and paid for. Not a runner-up plane; it was a winner plane. I ask the obvious question.

"We've known our numbers all along," says Mackenzie. "We knew we were going to win Alaska. We knew we were going to win in Louisiana. We knew we were going to finish close in Iowa." I wonder aloud how he could know Pat was going to win in New Hampshire when the margin of victory was so slight. "We didn't think it was going to be so close," he says. But where did the numbers come from? Tracking polls are expensive; only the real candidates can afford them. Mackenzie smiles. "The Dole campaign leaks like a sieve," he says. •

The majority party cracks up.

WHITE SQUALL

By John B. Judis

NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

As the campaign for the New Hampshire primary drew to a close, Pat Buchanan began aiming his barbs at the Republicans in Washington who were denouncing his candidacy. "Let me tell my friends down in Washington, you know, all the nonsense you're talking about me," Buchanan told a packed, noisy rally in Portsmouth on February 17. "You all represent corporate America, and you represent these companies that make billions of dollars by shutting down their American factories. Start thinking about the American working men and women for a change, like I do, because I'm coming down there—I'm coming down there.... And we're going to have a Republican Party that looks out for working men and women and middle-class families who have seen their standard of living fall."

Buchanan may not win the Republican presidential nomination, but, even if he does not, his candidacy will profoundly shake the Republican Party. His "conservatism with a heart" is a challenge to the economic tenets of the GOP and to the political strategy that conservatives have followed for two decades. Buchanan has

introduced within the Republican Party itself the class conflict that in the past divided Republicans from Democrats. It could split the Republicans in the fall, or it could lead to the development of a new Republican conservatism that takes account of the working- and middle-class voters who have entered the party over the last two decades.

Buchanan's success in New Hampshire calls into question the two-decade-old Republican strategy of uniting economic and social conservatives. This strategy was first spelled out in *National Review* Publisher William Rusher's 1975 book, *The Making of the New Majority Party*, and it guided New Right efforts in the 1978 election and Ronald Reagan's landslide victories in 1980 and 1984. Phil Gramm invoked it in endorsing Bob Dole. "I am back today to endorse Bob Dole," Gramm told a Manchester press conference February 18, "because I believe Bob Dole is the one Republican candidate in this race today who can bring together economic conservatives and who can bring together social conservatives...."

The strategy worked not by creating a new political synthesis but by grafting a new group of voters onto an old one. Since the Civil War, Republicans have been the principal party of American business—attracting everyone from small-town Midwestern bankers to New York CEOs and financiers. But, in the Great Depression, the Democrats, enjoying the support of the working and middle classes, became the majority party. Beginning in the 1960s, Republicans sought to create a new majority by attracting white Southern and Northern ethnic Democrats dissatisfied with the counterculture and the anti-war and civil rights movements. Richard Nixon's landslide victory in 1972 and Ronald Reagan's in 1980 and 1984 were based on uniting the Republican business elite with disenchanted white Democrats.

This strategy's success has altered the social composition of the Republican Party. The GOP now increasingly resembles the Democratic Party—except for the almost total absence of blacks. In New Hampshire in 1992, where both parties had competitive primaries, *The Los Angeles Times* found that 45 percent of Republican voters made less than \$40,000 compared to 50 percent of Democrats; 17 percent were blue-collar compared to 20 percent of Democrats; 10 percent belonged to unions compared to 14 percent of Democrats. In the Iowa Republican caucus this year, 57 percent of the voters made less than \$50,000 a year; in the New Hampshire primary, half of Republican voters did.

During the Reagan era, the different groups within the party maintained a marriage of convenience. Suburban middle managers and their wives were willing to ignore the party's anti-abortion plank as long as Republican nominees remained firmly committed to cutting business taxes and regulation. Catholic Democrats in Dubuque or evangelicals in North Carolina acquiesced to capital gains tax cuts because of their opposition to abortion, affirmative action and the Soviet Union. New Right strategists compared this alliance to that between Northern machine Democrats and white Southerners.

By drawing these working-class and middle-class Democrats into the Republican Party, however, Republican leaders of the '80s created a Trojan Horse within their own ranks.

The partners first began to quarrel during George Bush's administration. The cold war's end removed one important source of unity. And, as the threat of inflation was replaced by that of wage stagnation and job displacement or loss, many of the Reagan Democrats looked toward populist and economic nationalist (but not liberal) solutions. They blamed rootless multinational corporations, unscrupulous Washington lobbyists and unfair competition from Japan and China for their plight. They came to favor restrictions on immigration and tariffs on foreign goods but not labor law reform or national health insurance. In 1992, these voters were drawn to Buchanan in the Republican primary and to Ross Perot and Bill Clinton in the general election, but Clinton's social agenda and the continued erosion of their standard of living threw many of these voters back into the Republican Party in 1994.

The emergence of these voters has undermined the older strategy of uniting social and economic conservatives. Republicans can now be more accurately grouped according to whether they are conventional business conservatives or economic nationalists, social moderates or Christian social conservatives. In national Republican politics, Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld and New Jersey Governor Christie Whitman most clearly represent the blend of business conservatism and social moderation. Steve Forbes and Lamar Alexander are also in this camp but have disguised their pro-choice positions on abortion. Dole and Gramm mostly clearly represent the dwindling segment of Republicans who are both business and social conservatives. Buchanan and some of the freshmen House members represent the economic nationalist and socially conservative wings. And the erstwhile Republican Perot and his followers represent the politics of economic nationalism and social moderation.

Many of the economic nationalists within the Republican Party do not belong to the religious right. But the corollary isn't true: most of the religious right's rank-and-file are solidly with Buchanan on economic issues.

In 1993, Buchanan sparked a revolt inside the Christian Coalition over NAFTA, forcing executive director Ralph Reed to withdraw the organization's endorsement of the pact. In New Hampshire this February, I stood next to pro-life activists who cheered as lustily when Buchanan attacked NAFTA and the new World Trade Organization as when he promised to appoint a pro-life vice president. It's one constituency, united by a fear of economic and moral decline and by a nostalgia for an older America.

Many of the Republican economic nationalists are concentrated among voters who make less than \$40,000 and who have personally experienced a decline in their standard of living. In Louisiana, Iowa and New Hampshire, Buchanan gained his highest pluralities among these voters. But the appeal of economic nationalism is not strictly limited to working-class and downwardly mobile Republicans. Just as suburban voters worry about ghetto illegitimacy and urban crime, many upscale voters have begun to worry that either they or their children will suffer a decline in their standard of living. That was clearly what happened in New Hampshire—to Buchanan's own surprise.

Last summer, I traveled with Buchanan in the Midwest and New England. In Ohio, where his audience was blue-collar workers, he emphasized his opposition to NAFTA and to multinational corporations. When he spoke, his campaign workers unfurled behind him a banner reading "FREE TRADE NO, FAIR TRADE YES." In New Hampshire,

speaking at well-to-do suburban developments, he emphasized his opposition to abortion, gun control and higher taxes rather than to free trade. His banner read simply "BUCHANAN FOR PRESIDENT." Buchanan told me at the time that he didn't believe that most New Hampshire voters were interested in his "core issues" of trade and jobs.

That seemed a fair supposition. New Hampshire has the lowest unemployment rate in the country, and *Money* magazine has ranked three of its communities in its list of the twenty best places to live in America. Yet during the final weeks before the New Hampshire primary, Buchanan discovered growing enthusiasm for his economic views, even in the state's prosperous southern tier. At the rally in Portsmouth, which is about 3,000 miles from the Rio Grande, he got applause and shouts



PAT BUCHANAN BY JOHN SPRINGS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

of approbation when he declared his intention to block illegal immigration. At a boisterous February 18 rally in Nashua, one of *Money's* favorite communities, his attacks on NAFTA and GATT and his promise to represent the "working men and women of America" were repeatedly interrupted by shouts of "Go, Pat, go." In the primary, he won a plurality in the Manchester/Nashua corridor.

When I asked several people at the Nashua rally why Buchanan's message was so warmly received in a town that showed little sign of economic distress, I was told the same thing: even though there were now jobs, the new jobs paid less than the old. One aerospace engineer told me, "A lot of people who worked with me are now bagging groceries or driving taxis." That may be an exaggeration, but a computer consultant more convincingly described people he knew who had been laid off by DEC, Lockheed-Sanders and Raytheon during the last recession and who had not been able to find equivalent jobs afterwards. These anecdotes are borne out by statewide statistics. Median wages have declined statewide since 1989. While New Hampshire has added about 75,000 new retail and service jobs since the recession, it has lost thousands of better-paying construction and manufacturing jobs.

In addition, many New Hampshire residents believe that even if they are doing well their children may not. Last year, the University of New Hampshire Survey Research Center found a sharp increase in consumer confidence, but it also found growing pessimism about the future. Asked whether they thought their children "will have a harder or easier time achieving the American dream" than they did, 77 percent of those polled thought their kids would have a harder time.

As Buchanan surged during the last week before the primary, some Republican operatives simply refused to believe how profoundly their own party has changed. As I was leaving the rally in Nashua, a Dole official from Washington assured me that half of the Buchanan supporters in the room were Democrats who would be ineligible to vote in the primary. I knew that wasn't true of the people around me, but I performed my own informal poll as people were leaving. Everyone I asked said they were voting for Buchanan.

Other Republicans have insisted that Buchanan is an aberration in the Republican Party. David Brooks of *The Weekly Standard* compared him to the Italian Silvio Berlusconi, the former far-right prime minister of Italy. Former Bush aide Jim Pinkerton described Buchanan as an "isolationist Gephardtian liberal," and George Will, whose wife works for Dole, described Buchanan's conservatism as "bogus." But Buchanan's economics are squarely in the tradition of pre-World War II American conservatism, which favored tariffs but opposed the New Deal and the welfare state. He is responding to a problem—the decline in America's living standards—and to a constituency that other conservatives will eventually have to address.

It is important to distinguish between Buchanan's recognition of this problem and the quality of the solu-

tions that he proposes. What resonates among voters is a simple and irrefutable point that Buchanan makes in every speech: in the new global economy, American workers who make \$10 to \$20 an hour are being forced to compete with foreign workers who are often equally productive but willing to work for as little as \$2 an hour. That is driving down wages and is also prompting firms to move either to lower-wage areas in the U.S. or overseas. Buchanan's assertions about immigration and trade deficits are equally difficult to dismiss. Immigration from Mexico is putting some downward pressure on wages, and the trade deficit with Japan, concentrated in high-wage manufacturing, has also threatened valuable jobs.

Buchanan is no economist. In a radio interview he explained that immigration depresses wages by increasing the supply of labor and reducing the demand. His solutions are often simplistic. Across-the-board tariffs, for example, could jeopardize American firms that are dependent on imported components. As an Old Right conservative, Buchanan also ignores other equally important causes of wage decline, such as the disappearance of unions and the failure of the U.S. government to raise the minimum wage. Indeed, trade restrictions alone would not necessarily lead to an increase in Americans' standard of living. But outside of Morry Taylor, Buchanan was the only candidate in New Hampshire to pose the basic problem of how, within the new global economy, American workers can maintain or increase their standard of living. Bob Dole promised leadership; Lamar Alexander the replacement of welfare by private charity; and Steve Forbes a tax program that would precipitate a new fiscal crisis of the state.

Buchanan's trade stance could eventually cost him the Republican nomination—not directly through the loss of votes but by depriving him of funds from the party's business interests, funds he needs in order to compete in big states like California. What is more likely to cost Buchanan votes directly is his social agenda, which combines Catholic fundamentalism and Old Right bigotry. In New Hampshire, Buchanan's commitments to the Christian Coalition would have prevented him from defeating either Dole or Alexander in a one-on-one contest. Buchanan's association with Larry Pratt and his own views on the Voting Rights Act and the Confederacy may help him in the South, and probably did help in Louisiana, but will also limit his appeal in the North. Buchanan's victory in New Hampshire could be the high-water mark of his presidential surge.

But the most interesting questions posed by Buchanan's success in New Hampshire are not about whether he will win the presidency but about how other Republicans will come to terms with the issues he addressed and the constituency that he has championed within the party and among independents. Republicans ignore at their peril American workers' unease with global capitalism. That's the real lesson of this year's New Hampshire primary. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Hollywood Hustlers

Here's a candidate for a time capsule to be opened in the far future. **Heidi Fleiss: Hollywood Madam** (In Pictures), a documentary done for the BBC by the British filmmaker Nick Broomfield, may well interest those future folk. They will probably note that the basic data of prostitution haven't changed much. But they will surely note that prostitution, as a sociological site, fixes much about society's values and common-denominator fantasies; and they will get a view of these matters in our time, seen as through a glass pretty damned darkly.

Broomfield's persistent, probing film underscores this second aspect. Throughout history, wherever there were money and power, there were hookers. The future will know that. But this is Hollywood whoring, ramified out of elements that characterize Movieland except that here they're situated (somewhat) lower on the moral scale. A chief person in the Fleiss story, Ivan Nagy, a panderer and drug figure, is also a film director, and not just of porn. One of the Fleiss coterie is Victoria Sellers, daughter of Peter Sellers and Britt Ekland. The homes of the principal people look like Lana Turner settings. Chat and atmosphere continually make us feel that the studios are just outside the frames of many scenes. The porno players and hookers who are interviewed are ultra-consciously in Movieland.

It's all as if we were looking at the film industry through a sewer grating. The future will no doubt have its

own realms of glitz, but this may only heighten its fascination with an antecedent. The fact that many of the customers (we're told) are Arabs in quest of blondes doesn't lessen the Hollywood ambience. Such blondes might also be found in other show-biz centers, New York or Las Vegas, but no more of them than in Movieland.

The details of Fleiss's life were well splashed around at the time of her arrest and trial and sentencing from 1993 until 1995. Some other facts come out here, notably the collusion between the prostitution business and the Los Angeles police, who use the madams and the girls as informants. Whenever I read about a police bust of a pimping ring anywhere, I suspect that some higher-up wasn't paid off or that some unusual urgency prevailed. How could it be otherwise? If the police aren't blind and dumb, they know what's going on. Usually, between the police and pimps, it's footsie time; occasionally,

it's revenge time. So it is in the Fleiss story, though somewhat complexly.

We can see in this film that there are two main motives for a woman to enter the life. First, the obvious, ancient one is money. (A few staggering fees are mentioned here.) Second, probably just as old but historically less considered: the psychology of the individual woman. Fleiss is a prime instance.

She comes from an upper-middle-class California family: her father is a doctor, her mother a teacher. Money, at least in terms of stark need, could not have been a prime motive. She quit school at 16. Not common in her social stratum but not bizarre. At 19, however, she was the mistress—a member of a harem—of an American zillionaire in Switzerland who, it's said, gave her a million dollars in cash and a Rolls-Royce when he tired of her. How did that drastic change of status and venue occur? More importantly, why? The man was about 60, says Fleiss, and she has always been attracted to men, of whatever age, if they are over 40. But this is not quite an explanation.

Back in Hollywood she began an affair with Nagy (who could have been played by Oscar Homolka). Hungarian born, he was certainly of the requisite age and certainly had diabolical power over her. Though he was her lover, he "sold" her for a few hundred dollars to Madame Alex, a leading Hollywood madam, so that Fleiss could learn the business. Then he pushed Fleiss into her own pimping enterprise during which, though they quarreled often, she remained fundamentally subservient.

For reasons that are not quite clear, perhaps merely as an egotistical exercise of his powers with her and with the police, Nagy put the cops onto Fleiss in 1993 and caused all her public troubles. She speaks virulently about Nagy to Broomfield after her trial, yet, at the very end, *after her sentencing*, we hear a lovey-dovey conversation between her and Nagy. By this time I could hear all the psychoanalysts in the audience,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Angels and Insects. An A.S. Byatt novella dexterously transformed into cinema by Philip Haas. In mid-Victorian England, moral anarchy is revealed under seeming decorum. Trenchant. (Reviewed 2/19/96) **Anne Frank Remembered.** Jon Blair's documentary makes the facts we know more graphic and, through some tactful interviewing of survivors, deepens the poignancy. (3/4/96) **Lamerica.** In post-Communist Albania a young Italian con man and an 80-year-old Hoxha victim make their way toward two different kinds of freedom. Unsentimentally profound. (1/29/96) **Sense and Sensibility.** A delight in every way. Emma Thompson, who adapted Austen, acts enchantingly. The whole cast shines, as does Ang Lee's sensitive directing. (1/8&15/96)—SK

professional and otherwise, drooling with impatience to hurry home and tackle the Fleiss case.

How did Broomfield get all these people—I haven't mentioned many other shady or pathetic types—to talk to him? Money, apparently. At one point Madam Alex, who has since died, mentions the \$2,500 she got from Broomfield. (Wry note: since he was working for the BBC, the money came from British taxpayers.) Still, we can be glad he spent as he did and questioned as he did. His film goes on a bit too long—it would have been helped by omitting six or eight minutes toward the end—but it's intelligently intrusive, a bit caloric (how could such material be utterly frozen or freezing) and, if ultimately depressing, an ironic look at the Dream Factory.

Recently the mail brought a brochure from Screenplay Systems of Burbank, California, offering several kinds of software for film writers and others in film work. The leading item was an aid for screenplay authors called "Dramatica Pro: The Ultimate Writing Partner." Some excerpts from the sales copy:

• You tell Dramatica Pro your intent by answering questions that delve into your story's *character, plot, theme, and genre*.

Dramatica is the *Only Program* with a Story Engine.... It contains every dramatic element necessary to create a complete story.

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Dramatica Pro will also provide theory help, story points, brainstorming [short cuts], story analyses and story comparisons. These are not all. The list price was \$399, but the holiday sale price was \$239.95.

This software, however self-satirical it may sound, is only a codification of much industry practice. Not long afterward I saw two films whose scripts seemed, though of course I don't know, to have been written with the assistance of Dramatica Pro.

Broken Arrow (20th Century-Fox) is a machine-made action-adventure flick, and like all such, it was clearly built backward from its central gimmick. That gimmick is the hijacking of nuclear missiles in order to force the U.S. government to ransom them. Two Air Force pilots fly a test run with unarmed missiles in a Stealth bomber. One of the pilots, John Travolta, is (we quickly learn) in the pay of the gang of crooks. And so on. Like almost all such pictures, *Broken Arrow* (military slang for a lost nuclear missile) starts out hard,

tough, veristic, then soon flies into purest fantasy. The honest pilot, Christian Slater, gets into a number of fierce fights in one day, any one of which would have wiped out the Dallas Cowboys en masse, after which he gets dragged for miles under a speeding train. When he's free, the girl—Dramatica Pro wouldn't forget to include a girl—says to him, "Your shoulder's hurt." And darned if it hasn't been scraped slightly.

"Recognition" films have long been a staple: films (and plays) in which a main audience pleasure is a recognition of the habits, locutions, favorite music,

pop idols and difficulties of the characters in the piece. **Beautiful Girls** (Miramax) is set in a snowbound Massachusetts town and centers on the high school reunion of people in their late 20s. Most of them reside locally, one comes back from the city. There are loves, lusts, memories, fights, adjustments, all reminiscent of Paul Newman's *Nobody's Fool*, with a younger cast. Dramatica Pro could have supplied it all, especially if the writer pressed the theme button: the modern male's fear of commitment to marriage.

Query to the Writers Guild of America: When Dramatica Pro is used, will it get screen credit? •

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Peace In His Time

BY ROGER COHEN

Balkan Odyssey by David Owen

(Harcourt Brace, 389 pp., \$25)

Toward the end of David Owen's rambling account of international attempts to end the wars of Yugoslavia's destruction, he makes a suggestion. It concerns Radovan Karadzic, the psychiatrist from Sarajevo and the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, who predicted the "annihilation" of Bosnia's Muslims in 1991 before seeking, with sustained savagery, to make good on his word. "Leaving to one side the findings of the war crimes tribunal," Owen writes, "the medical profession in Belgrade in my judgment should never again let Dr. Karadzic practice medicine in their country." Well, well. No more appointments in some leafy Belgrade suburb with Dr. Karadzic, the psychiatrist with the hairstyle and the herringbone jackets, you know, the one who was on TV a lot during the Bosnian war and took great glee in mortaring the Sarajevo hospital where he once worked.

Even in a book filled with bizarre theories, this recommendation of Owen's is conspicuously outlandish. Owen, who got to know Karadzic and his methods well during thirty-two months as the European Union's chief mediator in the Balkans, is not prepared to say whether the Bosnian Serb leader is a war criminal. Such a determination, he believes, is for the International Tribunal in The Hague to make. But after the Serbian concentration camps at Omarska, Trnopolje, Susica and elsewhere, after the execution or "disappearance" of tens of thousands of Muslims in the first six months of the Bosnian war, after the relentless bombardment of Sarajevo, after the all-too-predictable dénouement on the killing fields of Srebrenica, Owen does feel qualified to venture that Karadzic may have violated the Hippocratic oath.

The former British foreign secretary should know: he is a doctor himself. He is also, as his book repeatedly demonstrates, a bitter man. The Balkan wars undid him, as they have undone many. It is one thing to establish a new political party and see it fail, as Owen did with the Social Democrats in England; it is

quite another to talk and talk and talk as almost a quarter-of-a-million people are killed and 3 million people are driven from their homes. The former is a professional disappointment; the latter tends to sap soul and sanity. *Balkan Odyssey* is the chronicle of a lacerating failure—that of its author to settle, or to grasp, the worst war in Europe since Hitler's war.

The failure, of course, was by no means entirely personal. With his increasingly wan smile, his pepper-and-salt hairdo, his rumpled suits and his good intentions, Owen became one of the more eloquent symbols of the international debacle that allowed the Bosnian war and the Serbian siege of Sarajevo to continue for forty months. In the figure of Owen, the weakness of a frayed Western alliance and a Europe united only in name was perfectly captured. In this sense, he was no more than an emblem of a far wider problem: the disarray of the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and NATO before barbarism on a scale not seen in Europe since the 1940s. *Balkan Odyssey* is a portrait, a singularly heavy-handed one, of a new world that is anything but brave.

But Owen himself also lost his way. Anyone who begins an account of Yugoslavia's destruction with a "Chronology of Events" that consists entirely of a list of his own appointments with various dignitaries clearly has an ego problem. For too long, hubris prevented Owen from seeing that, like most of his solemnly enumerated meetings, he was simply irrelevant. In the end it was difficult not to feel queasy watching him enjoy a lavish breakfast with his cronies at the Hyatt in Belgrade or meander through the lobby of Geneva's Inter-Continental. Grainy images of the 1930s came to mind. By the early months of 1995, it was not clear what he was doing beyond collecting a substantial salary. He no longer commanded respect outside Belgrade, where his relationship with Slobodan Milosevic was uniformly good. He was given to grumbling. He had run out of ideas.

It was in August, 1992, shortly after Serbian concentration camps were discovered by Roy Gutman of *Newsday* and Ed Vulliamy of *The Guardian*, that Owen arrived on the Balkan scene. His mission, as the European Union's envoy, was to flank Cyrus Vance, representing the United Nations, in a standing conference established to restore peace to the former Yugoslavia. Owen had been outraged by the camps, even sending a letter to John Major to suggest the use of force against the Serbs. But his initial indignation gave way, within months, to the dismal view that all parties to the war were "masters of disinformation, propaganda and deceit."

There followed, in early 1993, the Vance-Owen plan. It was a serious, if flawed, attempt to piece Bosnia together as a decentralized state with ten largely autonomous provinces. The plan had the misfortune of colliding with the incoming Clinton administration, whose disarray over the Balkans was then at one of its periodic apogees. Owen's anger at this is understandable; he calls Washington's cold shoulder to the plan "outrageous conduct." But Owen's handling, at a sensitive time, of relations with senior American officials was also staggeringly gauche.

After Vance-Owen, which was effectively dead by May, 1993, because the Clinton administration thought that it gave too much to the Serbs and the Serbs thought that it gave too little, it was all downhill. Owen worked for many months on a plan for a Muslim mini-state on about a third of the territory of Bosnia. He tried hard to secure an accord on self-government for the Krajina Serbs in Croatia. He took a tangential interest in the first "Contact Group" map dividing Bosnia between the Serbs and the American-brokered Muslim-Croat federation established in 1994. All for nought.

His mind had turned progressively into a labyrinth as treacherous and murky as Bosnia itself on a bad winter's day, as impenetrable as his often turgid prose. Of the Contact Group plan, for example, Owen writes: "If time was the enemy of the Bosnian Serb army, by giving the Muslims more time the Contact Group might have hoped to wait for the day when there was a better balance of forces on the ground, which of itself would make for a better-balanced peace settlement on the basis of the Contact Group plan." Yes, well, perhaps.

His thoughts become increasingly tangled up. He notes that General Ratko Mladic, the commander of the Bosnian Serbs, operates on two levels: "on one [he] is an intellectual, on the

other a barbarian." And having given this almost textbook definition of schizoid behavior (one that might equally be applied to Karadzic, Koljevic, Plavsic and the rest of the scholarly Pale crew), he solemnly insists that "Mladic is not a madman," the slit throats of pigs notwithstanding. Strange schemes for border changes devour Owen's brain and mingle with proposals for inland waterways and ports, convoluted equations for territorial divisions (what price 0.25 percent of Bosnia?), and a mounting rancor over the untrustworthiness of his Balkan interlocutors and the hostility of Washington. At one point, when he at last secures a Serbian embargo on the Bosnian Serbs in exchange for some mild international sanctions relief for Belgrade, Owen promptly undermines this action by allowing trans-shipment through Bosnian Serb territory of oil for the Krajina Serbs. His motive? He believes the oil (doubtless siphoned off in large quantities by Mladic's army) gives him diplomatic leverage over the Croatian Serbs because he can threaten to cut it off. In this bog of contradictions, coherence and principle simply sink without trace.

The tricks played on Owen's mind by Bosnia are caught in an intriguing passage covering the first deadly mortar attack on the Sarajevo market on February 5, 1994. The attack, in which sixty-nine people were killed, is an outrage, Owen concurs. But he goes on to express sympathy with inconclusive, largely speculative reports from United Nations investigators suggesting that the mortar may have been fired by Bosnian government forces intent on luring NATO into the war on their side. Indeed, so taken is he with this argument that, in a cable to European capitals, he chooses to quote a report from the Tanjug news agency—which is based in Belgrade—blaming the bombing on the Muslims. The more than 600,000 Serbian shells already fired on the city, including one the previous day that killed ten children in the Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinja, are not, apparently, mentioned in this communication.

When, in an abrupt *prise de conscience* at a meeting of the European Union, Alain Juppé, then France's foreign minister, rejects such muddying of the waters and calls for a NATO ultimatum to the Serbs obliging them to remove their heavy guns, Owen is plainly discomfited. Juppé's thunderbolt—his reference to "the need to preserve the values of civilization"—is entirely lost on Owen. "I replied," he writes, "that in talking of 'lifting the siege' Juppé was technically incorrect and had simplified

the situation." Technically incorrect! It would have been interesting to see Owen—widely known in the Bosnian capital and beyond by the tender sobriquet "Dr. Death"—try to explain that kernel of gobbledygook to the citizens of Sarajevo.

What Owen fails to see is that it was precisely such a "simplification" that Bosnia long demanded. Courage is also the ability not to be conveniently distracted. For the basic issue in the Bosnian war was not that complicated. The war was not "a problem from hell," as Warren Christopher observed in one of his less felicitous musings on the conflict. It was, at its outset and in its

nature, a barbaric onslaught, instigated in Serbia, against the Muslims of a state recognized by the United Nations, with the aim of expanding Serbia at the expense of Bosnia, thereby establishing a contiguous stretch of ethnically pure territory reaching from Belgrade to Serb-held parts of Croatia.

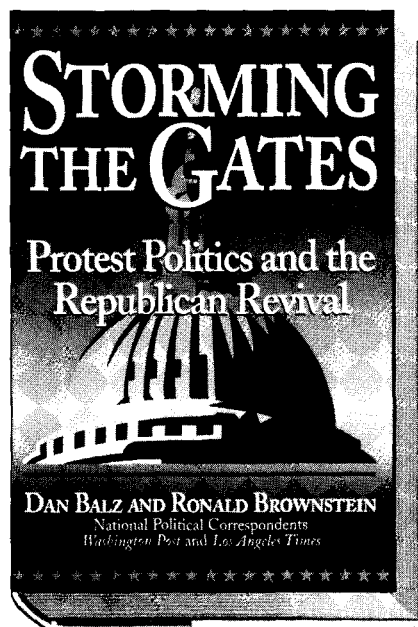
By early 1994, this Serbian campaign had been in progress for close to two years. A tough stand by NATO, as Juppé laudably, if belatedly, perceived, was imperative. But Owen was by this time already too obsessed with preserving the neutrality of the United Nations peacekeeping mission to Bosnia to ask what purpose that "neutrality" served,

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or to perceive that its inexorable effect was the appeasement of the Serbs. In this intellectual cul-de-sac Owen was joined by many senior officials, including the former commander of United Nations forces in Bosnia, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Rose, whose mantra about not crossing "the Mogadishu line" separating neutral peacekeeping from involvement in a war will be remembered as one of the more fatuous refrains of the Balkan tragedy. As Rose's more effective successor, Lieutenant General Rupert Smith, noted, "There's just no point hanging around in the middle of somebody else's war." Smith eventually crossed "the Mogadishu line," took on Mladic, and won.

Conceived to palliate the war rather than to resolve it, the United Nations mission to Bosnia was flawed from its outset in 1992. It was an exercise in easing consciences rather than an exercise in foreign policy. For Owen, at least until the summer of 1994, it seems to have become an end in itself. "Living with the arms embargo," he writes, "for all its inconsistencies and evasions, was never an immoral position for it ensured the continuation of UNPROFOR's humanitarian mandate for the first few years, when it saved hundreds of thousands of lives." In other words: to deny a people the right to defend themselves is morally defensible if it enables you to have the satisfaction of feeding them free macaroni.

Moreover, when that beleaguered people—having been evicted from their homes, bombarded and herded into camps—seeks to secure the military support of NATO or the United Nations, it is charged with maneuvering and deceit. The main mission of officials such as Owen and Rose then seems to be transformed into the exposure of perceived Muslim trickery. The "prevailing view" of U.N. commanders, Owen writes, was "that UNPROFOR's worst problems were with the Muslims." That's the thing about Bosnia's Muslims. They were a problem. They obstinately declined to disappear.

Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman had plotted the disappearance of the Bosnian Muslims, and of Bosnia, as early as 1991. Owen failed singularly to understand that, owing to the nature of the war, which was an attempt to eradicate a people and a society, the Bosnian Serbs had to be convincingly confronted if a settlement was to be found. The Bosnian Serbs were not a formidable army; they were a bunch of thugs, most effective against defenseless civilians and led, with bestiality and occasional bravado, by Mladic. NATO only

the outrageous notion that he could not think straight because he became a Serbophile. And, most obsessively, against the United States, which wrecked his peace plan. America is a land, Owen writes, that is marked by "vulgarity and loudness," though it is also "a fine democracy."

In his rant against America, Owen makes some valid points. Clinton came into office in early 1993 having proclaimed that "genocide" in Bosnia could not be tolerated. He then took fright. Weakened by the gays in the military furor and by his record on (and lack of record in) Vietnam, the president was in no position to take on a deeply cautious military establishment led by Colin Powell. The obsession of this establishment was "mission creep" and visions of "Bosnian quagmires"—what Richard Holbrooke has nicely described as "the Vietnam syndrome." Disoriented and weak, the administration started to scramble, getting itself in a Bosnian muddle that lasted until the summer of 1995. Bosnia paid a heavy price for this pusillanimity and indecision.

Of the Joint Chiefs, Owen writes that what they "wanted to avoid at all costs was putting U.S. ground troops into Bosnia and Herzegovina, whether to implement a settlement or impose a settlement. What the European countries wanted to avoid at all costs was becoming combatants in the war without U.S. troops to help." He adds

that "There was the usual U.S. wish to be seen to be leading from the front while not facing the hard fact that it is difficult to do this when one's troops are deliberately left behind." These are all telling observations.

Less acute is Owen's charge that the "perpetual dilemma," the one that the Pentagon and the White House refused to face, was this: "If widespread air strikes were to be used, it was essential that UNPROFOR be removed first, at the very least from vulnerable areas where they could be shot or captured." This dilemma was not confronted anywhere in Europe, either. In fact, this



SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC AND DAVID OWEN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

demonstrated the emptiness of that bravado with its bombing campaign of August and September, 1995. After that, at last, the end game could begin. But by then Owen was gone. (He resigned in May, 1995.) So, too, in large measure, was Bosnia's multiethnic society, shattered and shredded by terror.

Since there are no achievements to celebrate, Owen flails. Against the world's press, which was taken in (with the exception of the "outstanding" work of Misha Glenny) by the "propaganda" of the Muslim-led Bosnian government. Against the mendacity that is mysteriously endemic in the Balkans. Against

problem was blindingly obvious to anyone who spent more than a day in Bosnia. How could your main deterrent function when your own allies in United Nations uniforms were threatened by its bombs?

It was so obvious, indeed, that one has to ask why it was not resolved before July, 1995. The answer, of course, is that the failure to resolve it suited both Europe and America. They both preferred bickering with each other and agonizing about the future of Atlanticism to the idea of going to war for Bosnia. Owen, with his sophisms about deluding ourselves "if we think of good guys and bad guys in Bosnia," was a central cog in this machinery of denial and hypocrisy.

Certainly, the divisions between Europe and the United States sometimes made life difficult for Owen. He desperately needed the United States because the European Union does not have an army. Its diplomacy may be strong on good intentions, but it is weak on leverage. "This was the daily discomfort that we lived with," he notes. "My weapon was words and beyond them there was no prospect of international power being exercised." That threat was absent for a simple reason: the bond that held NATO together, that bound the United States to Europe in a forty-year confrontation with the Soviet Union, unraveled rapidly over Bosnia.

For Europe, almost giddily self-confident at the end of the cold war, this was a war in its midst; and morality could be sacrificed if such a sacrifice would end, or diminish, or contain, the affair. For America, the war was a relatively distant problem, stronger in its moral claim than in its strategic impact. The temptation to take the high ground—quite literally the high ground, in this case, as American pilots watched from 30,000 feet while European soldiers labored below on Bosnian soil—or more precisely, the temptation to keep their heads in the clouds—was therefore strong for the Americans. Moreover, the fact that several important Islamic allies—including Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia—were watching closely for any sign of American abandonment of Alija Izetbegovic's Muslim-led Bosnian government reinforced the American inclination to defend the Bosnian government more resolutely than its European allies.

Thus Bosnia demonstrated that the NATO alliance is no longer a marriage of interests. This was a tremendous shock. The squabbling was almost constant. Power was only used when the rapid

ROBERT SKIDELSKY

Author of *JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES*

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fall of the Krajina to Croatia in early August, 1995, convinced the alliance that Milosevic now wanted out of the war and would not use the full force of the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav army in the region. Although NATO has papered over the differences for now, the Bosnian crisis suggests that the adjustments in the transatlantic strategic relationship will be profound over the next decade.

Owen is convinced that, with strong American support, the Vance-Owen plan could have been imposed by force. He is equally convinced that the real reason the United States did not get behind the plan was not that it granted some "ethnically cleansed" areas to Karadzic—overall, the Serbs would have had to give up only about 40 percent of the territory they held—but that it would have required the deployment of American troops to back the reversal of ethnic cleansing that was a central pillar of the proposal. Perhaps. But as Owen dwells on the collapse of his plan, and argues repeatedly that it would have secured a better Bosnia than the divided land enshrined two bloody years later in the Dayton accords, one has the impression of a man fixated on an illusion. Vance-Owen, because it never happened, has become all things to Owen. He is in love with a set of principles never applied on the ground. Indeed, there is no real evidence that the Serbs would ever have complied.

Owen, of course, did not help his cause by suggesting, in an interview in *The New York Times*, that Christopher was a touch gaga on Bosnia, just as he was getting to know the new Secretary of State. He showed a striking naïveté three months later in Athens by speaking of a "bright day" for the Balkans just because Karadzic had signed the plan. Shortly afterwards, following a harangue from Mladic, the Bosnian Serb Assembly in Pale rejected it, which was perfectly predictable. And that was pretty much that.

The evidence is strong, in any event, that Owen only got Milosevic, and briefly Karadzic, behind the plan by convincing them that Serb territorial concessions would be drawn out over a very long period and that the central government of Bosnia would be a monument to paralysis. Owen also glosses over the contribution of his plan to the Muslim-Croat war that erupted in 1993. The Croats took the generous allocation to them of territory around Travnik as an invitation to hostilities. It is not quite fair to say that Vance-Owen is a peace plan that started a war; but it

did help push a frayed Muslim-Croat alliance over the edge into outright combat.

Owen is prickly. He knows in his heart that he should have quit after the Vance-Owen plan failed. He does not want to be seen to have condoned a genocidal attack on Bosnia's Muslims. He makes all the right noises about "ethnic cleansing." He litters the book with perfunctory statements that the horrors perpetrated by the Serbs in Bosnia differed in scale from those of other ethnic groups. He takes care to note the occasions on which Karadzic criticized him for being "anti-Serb." He writes, stretching credulity, that history will demonstrate that he and his co-chairman at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia "were the most consistent protectors of the interests of the Bosnian Muslim citizens."

The trouble with all this is that he protests too much. Woven into the texture of the book is a different vision, one that is hard to distinguish from that of Milosevic or apologists for the horrors perpetrated by the Serbs. Since Owen found that he could do business with Milosevic, he often seems to see the war through the Serbian leader's eyes. Certainly, Milosevic's role in the destabilization, and then the destruction, of Yugoslavia seems to escape Owen entirely.

The central thesis of this book, insofar as it is anything more than a self-serving memoir, is that it was folly to attempt to preserve the internal borders of the Yugoslav republics in the break-up of the former Yugoslav state. "The unwarranted insistence on ruling out changes to what had been internal administrative borders within a sovereign state was a fatal flaw," he writes. For Owen, these borders were "arbitrary," dreamed up by Tito and his commanders at the end of World War II. If Croatia and Bosnia were allowed to secede, Owen argues, then their borders had to be redrawn. The right to self-determination could not be granted simply to Croatia and Bosnia; it had to be extended also to the Serb minorities living in those countries.

But this, of course, is essentially an argument for Greater Serbia: all Serbs should be allowed to live in one state. Although it is not explicitly stated, this appears to be Owen's intimate conviction. And the line espoused by Owen was the very one used by Milosevic as Yugoslavia hurtled toward disintegration in 1990. According to Milosevic, nations (read: "Croats" or "Muslims")

could secede, but republics (read: "Croatia" or "Bosnia") could not secede, because the Serbs there did not wish to leave Yugoslavia. The internal borders had to be redrawn, therefore, to put all Serbs in a single land.

The thrust of this contention, moreover, is to place the Serbs in the role of passive defenders of the status quo—that is, the former Yugoslavia—who are confronted by active secessionists—that is, Croats and Muslims bent on going their own way. Far from aggressors, Serbs are transformed into victims. This is quite a maneuver. The general view of the wars of 1991 to 1995 is turned on its head; and the press becomes a malevolent force mysteriously engaged in the "demonization" of the Serbs.

Covering the Bosnian war for *The New York Times*, I wrestled repeatedly with these arguments. The hundredth time an indignant Serb asks you, over an excellent plum brandy, why it is that you have "demonized" his people, you begin to wonder. But the longer I covered the war, and the more I pondered its origins, the stronger became my conviction of Serb culpability, in the extent of the Serbs' savagery during the conflict and in the coherence of the destructive design behind it. It was Milosevic's push for Serbian hegemony over much of the southern Slav lands that shattered the delicate mosaic of Yugoslavia. Greater Serbia was an objective actively pursued; it was not the reluctant haven of a scattered Serbian people marooned by the designs of Croat and Muslim secessionists.

Owen's account overlooks many things, of which the most basic is this historical fact: the borders of the Yugoslav republics were not conceived "during a march" by Milovan Djilas, the partisan commander, or anyone else. Those borders are, generally, much older. Only at the height of the medieval empire did Serbia embrace any of the land west of the Drina river. The border between Croatia and Bosnia corresponds broadly with the extent of Ottoman penetration into Europe. The redrawing of frontiers that Owen repeatedly proposes would thus have involved trampling across centuries of tradition; it would not have been a mere administrative adjustment. To understand the problem, it is enough to look at what happened in such border towns as Visegrad and Zvornik, just across the Drina river in Bosnia. The majority Muslim population there were slaughtered or evicted to make way for the attempted Serbian adjustment. Likewise, the Croats in Vukovar.

Moreover, the right to determine their own fate that Milosevic demanded for the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia is precisely the right that he violently denied to the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo when he set Yugoslavia on a course of disintegration in 1987. By crushing the autonomous status of Kosovo (where Albanians account for 90 percent of the population) and then Vojvodina, and by installing his own men in Montenegro, Milosevic effectively declared the transformation of Yugoslavia into Serboslavia. Instead of controlling one of the eight seats in the rotating presidency bequeathed by Tito in 1980, Milosevic, by 1990, controlled four: Serbia, Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro.

This profound change, and the tidal wave of Serbian nationalism that accompanied it, provided the backdrop for the development of Franjo Tudjman's virulent nationalism in Croatia and the rise of the nationalist parties, including Alija Izetbegovic's Party of Democratic Action, in Bosnia. Tudjman and Izetbegovic were reacting to Milosevic. Of course Tudjman's ambivalent remarks about the Ustashe regime, particularly his claim that it represented "the historic aspirations of the Croatian people for an independent state," were an unforgivable provocation to the Serb minority of Croatia, whose forebears had been the victims of a genocidal assault by that very regime. Of course the very existence of a Muslim nationalist party in Bosnia was incendiary. Of course the international community, in its premature, German-prodded recognition of Croatia, and then Bosnia, made conflict more ineluctable. But it was the Serbian leader who set the whole disaster in motion.

When Milosevic realized, in early 1991, that his actions had dealt a lethal blow to Yugoslavia, he made a strategic choice: rather than try, at all costs, to preserve the state, as the Yugoslav army wished to do, he would seek to carve a Greater Serbia out of it. The rest followed logically: Vukovar, Dubrovnik, Zvornik, Sarajevo. But all this is lost on Owen. His analysis of Milosevic is curiously flat and guarded. He notes, without comment, that Milosevic "self-mockingly referred to his performance in 1992 as being an unfortunate period when he made many mistakes." Very funny. I am sure that the Muslims of Zvornik, Foca, Visegrad, Brcko, Prijedor, Vlasenica and Bijeljina, I mean the ones who are still alive, would love Sloba's levity.

Owen never looks seriously at the Serbian leader's role in the disintegra-

tion of Yugoslavia. He never examines the links between Belgrade and the marauding militias of Arkan and other killers operating first in Croatia and then in Bosnia. The worst massacres in Bosnia between April and September 1992 are attributed by Owen to "uncontrollable Serbian elements blatantly doing what they wanted." Why then, from Sanski Most in the northwest to Trebinje in the southeast of Bosnia, were their actions so coherently directed toward the eviction of 750,000 Muslims from their homes and the decimation of Islamic culture throughout 70 percent of Bosnia?

A meeting with Mira Markovic, Milosevic's influential wife, on March 27, 1994, is related by Owen in some detail. He quotes her as saying: "I gather from my husband that he has failed to convince you that he is not a nationalist. I will tell you why he is not. I would never have married or stayed married to him if he was a nationalist." This seems to do the trick. "Personally I do not believe that he is a nationalist," Owen writes, "or even was one in the late 1980s, but rather that he played the nationalist card to gain and hold power."

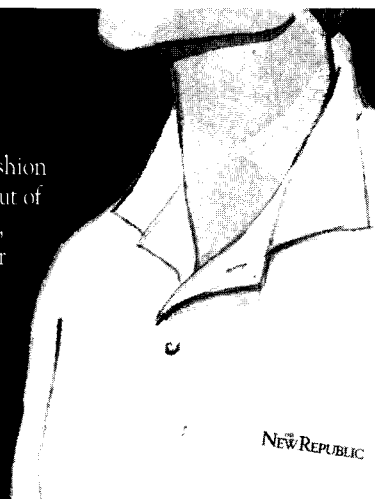
This view has become fashionable in the light of Milosevic's eventual exas-

peration with Karadzic and his helpful hand in the Dayton accords. But the truth, I believe, lies elsewhere. Milosevic is a nationalist, but he is also, and above all, a coward. He stirred his people to a frenzy, took them on a wild killing spree, and then abandoned them in mid-massacre because he did not have the courage of his convictions. He remains, in his atrophied heart, a shrewd Communist apparatchik. He was forced into the limelight, but he did not particularly like it, preferring the exercise of a shadowy power. He is terrified of ending his days like Ceausescu. His furtive eyes and jutting chin capture the two sides of the man: a craven, clever bully.

The suffering that this deeply flawed man inflicted on his own people, and on other people, is immeasurable. But Owen is seduced by Milosevic—his humor, his hospitality, his good English, his apparent reasonableness from 1993 onward—and the effects of this seduction are evident through the book. Serb history has been misunderstood or overlooked. Death counts in Bosnia have been exaggerated. The Muslims repeatedly have bombed themselves. The world has applied double standards to Croats and Serbs. Everyone did horrible things to everybody in Bosnia. And

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so on. I was not at all surprised, then, when Lt. Colonel Milovan Milutinovic, the spokesman for the Bosnian Serb army, gave Owen's book a rave review in a conversation with me last week in Banja Luka.

The siege of Sarajevo, in Owen's analysis, was not a real siege. It was, he insists, two sieges: "one by the Bosnian Serb army, with shells, sniper fire and blockades, and the other by the Bosnian government army, with internal blockades and red tape bureaucracy which kept their people from leaving." This claim, of course, is not without some justification. The Bosnian government did try to prevent the complete depopulation of its beleaguered capital. But is that really the equivalent of what the Serbs were doing to Sarajevo? Does Owen really not see that the only issue, morally and politically, was the Serbian siege? The rest was literally secondary, since it owed its existence to the overriding fact of the Serbian encirclement.

And Owen continues. Just as a siege is not really a siege, genocide is not really genocide—when it comes to the Bosnian Muslims. Owen quotes the U.N. Convention, which defines genocide as certain "acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." A better description of the Serbian rampage against the Muslims in the first six months of the war—and of the gory reprise in Srebrenica at the war's conclusion—would be hard to find; but Owen is not convinced. Genocide, he correctly notes, was committed by the Croatian Ustashe against the Serbs during World War II. And quoting George Kenney, the former State Department official whose ideas on the war have steadily shifted, he suggests, preposterously, that as few as 25,000 people may have been killed in Bosnia. Then he throws in the towel: the International Tribunal in The Hague will have to decide whether it was genocide, just as it "will investigate whether after the fall of Srebrenica an appalling massacre of male Muslims took place."

Emotion does briefly seize him. This occurs as Owen listens to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees official describe his first-hand observation of a group of Muslims—"young and old"—who have been herded out of Prijedor by the Serbs and are being pushed across front lines in the summer of 1992. "As they walked," he writes in his account of the official's experience, "weighed down by bags containing the few possessions that they had been able to gather up, the Serbs

started to fire small arms over their heads and a few fell wounded or dying. Then, as they moved out of range, shell fire started and he watched as they struggled on, stumbling and running as shells landed around them. Some were hit. He felt unable to do anything but stand transfixed by the horror of it all, suddenly realizing that tears were streaming down his face. As he spoke, there was not a dry eye in the room; military men and politicians alike were at a loss for words. We shuffled on to other business, but I doubt that anyone who heard him will ever forget it."

By the end of the book, however, it is pretty clear that Owen has forgotten. His "shuffle" has become permanent, a state of mind, gray, debilitating, finally pathetic. He dismisses the notion of "victims" and "aggressors." He reminds readers that he "often stressed that the U.N. must not be seen as being at war with the Serbs." He quotes at some length the retired former Deputy Commander of U.S. forces in Europe, General Charles G. Boyd, an officer with

famously pro-Serb views, on the Muslims' odd proclivity for shelling themselves. In short, he has lost touch with the essence of a war in which, behind all the beguiling arguments about the Serbs' service on the Allied side in two world wars and their desire merely to "remain in Yugoslavia," terror was systematically applied in pursuit of the racist project that started to unfold in Kosovo in 1987 and went on to destroy Yugoslavia. "The balance to be struck in international diplomacy," Owen writes, "between waiting for the ideal and settling for the achievable is never an easy one to find." But diplomacy bereft of principle is appeasement; and the tarrying ideal notwithstanding, there were many thousands of lives that could have been saved in Bosnia through a modicum of honesty, decency and courage. That was "achievable."

ROGER COHEN covered the Balkan war for *The New York Times* during the last two years and is writing a book about the conflict.

Practically Wisdom

BY STEPHEN HOLMES

John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism by Alan Ryan

(W.W. Norton, 414 pp., \$30)

They are buoyed by his seriousness, gusto and originality, but readers continue to balk at John Dewey's eccentric style and uncertain philosophical achievement. For Dewey, as portrayed in Alan Ryan's lively book, is simultaneously "enchanted and infuriating," noble and nuts-making. He speaks directly to our deepest concerns, but he makes us feel that we are meandering in a soupy fog. His mood is infectious, but his theories are blurred. His best books, in Ryan's blunt and generous appraisal,

are repetitive and fuzzy-edged. They are sometimes labored, and they alternate passages of real nobility with passages of clumsy and long-winded groping after an elusive point. They are also thought-provoking, imaginative, and original, and like nothing else in twentieth-century philosophy.

But what exactly do Dewey's twenty books and dozens of articles, which were

once so rousing acclaimed, have to say? According to Ryan, commentators from Christopher Lasch to Richard Rorty have got Dewey wrong. And schoolbook classifications such as "pragmatism"—or Ryan's less conventional "unflinching middle-of-the-road radicalism"—are also of little help.

So who was John Dewey? And how can such a musty ancestor still appear, at least to some, as an irrepressible contemporary? One clue to Dewey's persistent charm is that he is simultaneously homespun and sophisticated. He is wholly American—he resembles us—but he worked also in a larger European tradition; he always kept the shadow of Hegel dancing somewhere in his closet. His capacity to fuse seemingly incompatible commitments was nothing short of astonishing, and it certainly helps to explain the universal failure to wedge him into a tidy box. He was an unsentimental romantic, an anti-utopian optimist and a scientific humanist, not

to mention an individualist who de-emphasized individual rights, a Darwinist who believed in harmony and a socialist who never took Marx seriously even for a second. He was a philosopher for managers *and* meaning-seekers, as well as a committed social planner with an overwhelming sense of unintended consequences. While his style was hortatory, he always stressed the utter futility of moral conversion and good intentions. And he did not combine his contrary attitudes accidentally. These yokings together were the deepest expression of his thought.

Dewey's critics, naturally enough, blame him for being neither fish nor fowl. But even sympathetic and imaginative readers lament their incapacity to pin him down. Ryan tries vainly to bring Dewey into focus by dwelling on odd episodes plucked from his life and career, telling us that Jane Addams "introduced Dewey to Chicago by taking him on a tour of the red-light district" and surmising that Sidney Hook felt "displaced in Dewey's affections" when Dewey remarried at age 87. (He was born in 1859 and died in 1952.) It is obviously a bit more useful to know that Dewey voted consistently against Roosevelt and for the socialist Norman Thomas. And it is certainly fascinating to observe how, in 1938, he broke off

his twenty-five-year relationship with THE NEW REPUBLIC, when the fellow-traveling magazine rebuked him for having joined the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky.

This shrewd and personal book lingers over Dewey's life not because it is intrinsically interesting, but because Ryan cannot resist the temptation to tweak his colleagues, or to flog himself. For you see, "contrary to appearances, many professors wish they were doing something more exciting." As a public intellectual who passionately believed in the importance of his own efforts, Dewey is a standing reproach to warehoused professors and ivory-tower Hamlets: "The academic world is full of clever and energetic people who have become bored by their own ideas and can hardly bring themselves to write them down or think them through except under compulsion or on the offer large sums of money." This is true enough, though its implications for Dewey studies are not immediately apparent. For even as Ryan lauds Dewey as "a model of the engaged philosopher," he faults Dewey's writings for "the absence of specific institutional recipes," adding that Dewey was "careless" about "the way a society of the kind he wanted was to be built and sustained," and finding the work "faintly

maddening in the way it gestures at large issues without telling us what to do about them." If so, then in what way was Dewey "engaged"? How did this bookish man climb down from his ivory tower without becoming an unwitting pawn of wily politicians or unsavory social forces?

What draws Ryan to Dewey, first of all, is the social-democratic hue of his mostly literary engagement, not the mere fact that he took partisan stances in popular magazines. What intrigues Ryan is not so much that Dewey was a "moderate radical," like Ryan himself, as that he was bitterly outraged at the many injustices of his society but never sunk to denouncing science and "modernity" or, nostalgically and pointlessly, embracing traditionalism and religion. Indeed, even when railing against America's "excessive individualism," Dewey remained "a self-conscious defender of modernity," for whom jeremiads about our spiritual wasteland were always symptoms of self-indulgence.

Politically, Dewey's uncomplacent liberalism lands him somewhere between Marxism and *laissez faire*, which is surely the right place to be, though it is hardly unoccupied territory. He knew, for starters, that democracy is incompatible with a wholly unregulated market, since

"(An) incendiary thesis..."

that separate races of human beings evolved different reproductive strategies to cope with different environments..."

—Malcolm W. Browne,
New York Times Book Review

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J. Philippe Rushton

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a life history perspective

J.
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Rushton

t r a n s a c t i o n

MARCH 11, 1996 THE NEW REPUBLIC 41

groups that are free to organize and to pursue their interests will always find it advantageous to regulate the economy. And he was not particularly bothered by this realization, since he never subscribed to the dim fiction that modest government intervention leads inevitably to Stalinism. Indeed, he denied that nonintervention was an option at all, and he considered *laissez faire* a misnomer, since all "free markets" are regulated by enforceable rules of property and contract. The political challenge, Dewey thought, was to choose the form of regulation that best serves the interests of the community and its members.

Dewey's approach "made it possible to think of other enemies to freedom than government." He did not conceive government solely as "an enterprise for mopping up the negative consequences that our voluntary actions may have for strangers." He also viewed it in a more positive light, as facilitative rather than simply prohibitory and remedial. Liberal government must tax and spend to build bridges, to enforce contracts and to create schools, since in so doing it lowers the transaction costs that fall upon individuals who desire to cooperate voluntarily for their mutual advantage. The ultimate *raison d'être* of government, in short, is "to enable the infinitely various private projects of the citizenry to flourish alongside and in interaction with one another."

Needless to add, Dewey also thought the government should spring to the help of the weak and the needy. He did not believe that elementary education should be distributed on market principles, according to the ability to pay. He favored unemployment insurance, health insurance, pensions and women's rights, and he sided consistently with employees against employers. He denigrated classical liberalism from a socialist perspective rather than a communitarian one, as a plutocratic creed that served a wealthy elite. And he was no ancestor of the New Left, either: he displayed zero patience for romantic anarchism; he favored a strong government; he considered squeamishness

about bureaucracy absurd, since only an effective bureaucracy has a chance to protect weak groups against social predators. Ryan experiments with various clarifying analogies (the Fabians, guild socialism, and so on), but finally he settles for the idea that "the position he occupied was roughly that of the British Labour Party." The ultimate impression we come away with is that "by American standards, Dewey was quite Red enough."

Ryan's understandable reluctance to follow Pink John in advocating "overall

the system that Dewey favored, Ryan comes up with the following formulation:

It would certainly involve more government intervention than Roosevelt wanted in principle, and it needed a long-term, not just an emergency, exercise of political authority in economic matters. Some mixture of nationalization, price and wage controls, technical and manpower planning would have to be a permanent fixture.

Ryan distances himself from this general approach, with unnecessary politeness,

by commenting ironically that "Dewey had no doubt about the planners getting things right," and adding that "the competence of modern governments to perform the tasks Dewey would have placed on them remains uncertain." What he means to say is that by underestimating the pitfalls of an economy managed for the sake of fellowship and equality, Dewey (like many others of his time) was grossly in the wrong. And Dewey's grasp of international affairs was not much more impressive than his understanding of economics. He flirted intermittently with isolationism, having been burned by his endorsement of intervention in 1914, and apparently he came to believe that international organizations could successfully outlaw war by the sincerity of their declarations. As late as March 1939, he pleaded against American intervention in World War II with the following flourish: "if the



JOHN DEWEY BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

national control of economic activity" comes across in his recognition that "Dewey's detestation of the capitalist order had a semireligious quality, and so, therefore, did his vision of socialism." Indeed, Ryan scoffs at Dewey's suggestion that a prosperous economy can be fueled by fellow feeling, without recourse to the profit motive, though he feels an unexplained sympathy for Dewey's embrace of industrial democracy (apparently because it will always remain a lost cause!) as well as for the idea that "capitalism evacuates the meaning of work from the activity of capitalists and worker alike." In an admirable but less than satisfactory attempt to delineate

United States is drawn into the next war, we shall have in effect if not in name, a fascist government in this country." If the prediction was poor, the advice was worse.

Having praised Dewey up and down as a model of political engagement, Ryan confesses that Dewey has little "feel" for the realities of political life. His futile efforts on behalf of a third party reflect an honest man's estrangement from the unsavory scene of factional strife. His apolitical instincts also burst forth when he painted political conflict, in childish colors, as a struggle between the bad and the good, the self-interested and the public-spirited, the privileged and the

people, the tribunes of group selfishness and the believers in "social intelligence." Yet such lapses of judgment are less interesting than the deeper shortcomings of Dewey's political theory. It is inspiring to read that democratic politics should promote the fullest possible development of the human potential of all citizens. But such an ambitious aim does not necessarily make it easy to delimit, on principle, the jurisdiction of public officials who are charged with solving social problems and remedying social harms. This is not to deny that Dewey himself sincerely embraced limited government; but he worried too little about the possibility that his idealized public might swallow a vulnerable private realm.

Most of Ryan's criticisms of Dewey's political thought run along such lines. He remains skeptical of the "communitarian" strand in Dewey's thought, noting disapprovingly that "there is a pious quality in his constant invocation of the social." And he puzzles about how to reconcile "Dewey's ultrasocial conception of individuality," including the idea that a person gains fulfillment only by exercising a social function, with his defense of individual liberty and his idea of individual development as the ultimate good.

Dewey's "communitarianism," if we want to call it that, aimed to found feelings of mutual identification on a common task (the exhilaration of solving collective problems collaboratively and rationally), not on a common creed or a set of shared traditions, and certainly not on common ascriptive traits. He would surely have hesitated to curtail rights to dissent, to sacrifice political accountability for the sake of sentiments of belonging, or to value human individuals solely according to their calculable social contribution. Above all, Dewey did not long to obliterate the multiple loyalties of a crazy-quilt immigrant population or to collapse them into an undifferentiated form of membership. But Ryan still worries that Dewey "exaggerated the social element in human life," and therefore underestimated the importance of non-conformism and the ability to stand up robustly to a crowd. Never follow a multitude to do evil was not a Deweyan maxim, even if he would surely have acknowledged the point.

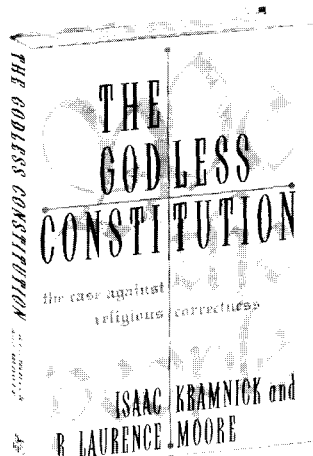
Salvation through membership is an alternative to Freud's therapy for individuals, which makes it all the more striking that Dewey "had nothing to say about sex" and displayed a general "unconcern with the private world." Indeed, "Dewey's ethics made it slightly

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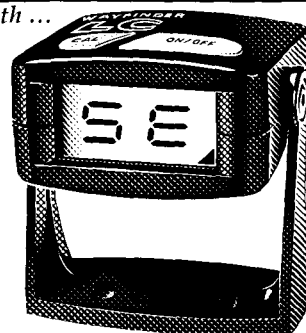
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mysterious that human beings have private lives, private ambitions, and private miseries at all." This was a serious shortcoming in a philosophy that proposed

to "take all human life as its province." Without repudiating his earlier repudiation of the ivory tower, Ryan reproaches Dewey for slighting "the introspective

nonjoiner." And he seems to agree with Santayana that Dewey "had little understanding of the extent to which thinking demands withdrawal, a retreat into an inner self, and a distancing of oneself from the world." Dewey's belief that the socially "integrated" child is the happy child may well have blinded him to the occasional advantage of shielding children from the deadening impact of the quotidian world. If society is inherently unjust, Ryan finally asks, if the strong consistently injure and destroy the weak, even without intending to, is alienation from society really the gravest human sin?

Some of the time, or so it appears, Dewey hoped for "an implausible harmony" among individuals. He did not exactly say that his contemporaries could successfully recreate the lost mutualities and solidarities of traditional, face-to-face societies; but he seems to have believed, unrealistically, that effective communication among citizens about the foreseeable consequences of joint activity might well generate a harmony of perceived problems and proposed solutions. Dewey was on the right track when he described democracy as a "search procedure" for turning up new policies aimed at improving our separate and common lives. Where he went wrong was in his assumption that democracy could reconcile diametrically opposed social interests. Not only is "democracy" not up to this challenge, but social solidarity may not necessarily be the highest good: "It is hard to repress the thought that Dewey may simply have been asking too much of democratic politics and that a moderate degree of alienation from one another is the price we pay for a liberal society and its virtues of privacy and diversity." That Dewey underestimated privacy, individuality and disagreement, while overestimating community, democracy and mutual harmony, is the gist of Ryan's criticism of Dewey's political thought.

Admittedly, Dewey is better known as a philosopher of education than as a political theorist, and his experimental

The Angel of Self-Knowledge

How razor-clean was it supposed to become
the zero at the core of each of these
mingling with leaves as they fork-up in wind—bright yellow distillations of—
uprising evidence of this one world's gigantic
curvature—how clean, how denuded of *their* foliage,
these desperate, aimless ones in twos along the built-up paths,
in ones in corridors, these ones so skillfully grouped-up
in liquid clutches of impermanence,
now taking the long way back along the lake,
now in the auditorium beaten-upon by wind and then a little
rain. They look in their envelopes.
They look on their paper calendars, under their tongues,
stare at the shadows their bodies cast, stare at the shadows their folding-chairs

cast,

with each glance something like a leaf let loose,
I watch it float, each eyelashed lurching-forward, each hoarse
and giddy self-appraisal, I watch them
let it go, each owner standing so stilly now behind his words as they
are given-up,

on lunch-break, beside the phone-booth where one's crying
softly now
into the glistening receiver, beside the bookseller, the fruitseller
where one comes right to the warm brink
of a yellow pear—oh from here
it looks so like a dream of shelter—
the way that reaching hand mimics the eye, romancing,
the way it quickens at its root, desiring,
the other one now rooting in a pocket for some change,
and other ones now touching a chin, a lip, an index-finger rough
on a cheek, as if to wipe away a glance—down there—oh how much
must I see—how clean

did they want to become,
shedding each possibility with gusts of self-exposure,
bubbling-up into gesture their quaint notions of perfection,
then letting each thought, each resting-place, get swept away—
because that was *not what I meant—was not at all—*
and since the future isn't real, is just an alarmclock,
where the last domino can finally drop,
wearing a street-address around its medicated neck—
oh that—of course—the wound we cannot medicate—
you know—the room of icons so preserved we move them round to fit
the furniture, opinions nestling in them, down in the folds, the inlays,
opinions and calculations and bits of stardom
right down in there in the grain of the icons,
some truth in there too now, maybe in the form, who can tell,
maybe even some ecstasy, some little monstrosity,
though it doesn't matter,
since we can't tell the difference,
since it's all pre-recorded, or something like that—
who will they be when they get to the bottom of it,
when they've stripped away the retrospect, when they've peeled away the
orphanhood, the shimmering merriments of consolation?
How will they feel the erasures erase them?
Who will they resemble when they're done with resemblance?

JORIE GRAHAM

schools were also a more serious form of practical engagement than most intellectuals imagine possible. Ryan eloquently explains how "the point of education," for Dewey, was "to enhance our experience and capacity for experience." Rather than relaying undigested facts and inherited ideas, polishing verbal jewelry to be periodically displayed before houseguests, schools must instill habits of ceaseless inquiry, teaching young people how to unearth pertinent information when it is needed and how to adapt to changing situations. Above all, a democratic education must train students to solve common problems by cooperating effectively with people of different backgrounds and inclinations. Dewey stressed practical skills, especially skills of collaboration, rather than the "mere" intake of information, for moral reasons among others: he believed that impractical people tend to become either passive or rebellious. Rejecting the prejudice that science is the enemy of humanism and a threat to morality, he naturally assumed that children should learn to live with the scientific picture of the world. Indeed, he thought that a scientific education was also an ethical education, for attentiveness, open-mindedness, consecutive thinking and respect for evidence are themselves forms of moral integrity.

Although he was "a self-conscious defender of modernity," Dewey also recognized that social differentiation, specialization and urbanization conspired to produce a particularly modern form of self-ignorance. While a farm child learns that candles are made with tallow, a city child has no idea how the light switch works. Dewey reasonably "feared that in the conditions of modern city life children would lose touch with the realities of how life was sustained." At the University of Chicago's Laboratory School, he had children grow wheat in a corner of the school yard, grind it once it had grown, knead the dough and bake it into bread. He also had them build their own furnace, always with the intent of raising their awareness of the intimate interconnections between the social organism and its natural environment.

Critics of Dewey's philosophy of education split neatly into two camps. Conservatives deride him for shirking discipline and order, for turning the schoolroom into a disorganized playground. Radicals accuse him of plotting to churn out factory fodder, beautifully tooled cogs for the new industrial order. Ryan is at his helpful best in revealing the inadequacy of these mutually inconsistent allegations, showing that Dewey was neither

a romantic anarchist nor a lackey of corporate America. Whatever his self-anointed followers may think, he did not favor indulging the licentious wishes of the child and he did not encourage self-expression for its own sake. And he certainly did not advocate vocational training to ensure that big business would be supplied with a well-lubricated workforce.

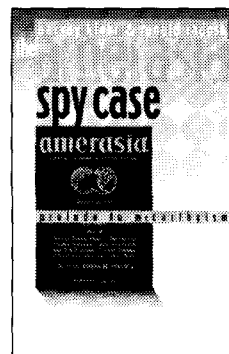
Still, Ryan does sympathize uncertainly with Richard Hofstadter's assertion that Dewey promoted a certain philistinism or anti-intellectualism in American life. His emphasis on training children for cooperative activities ostensibly led him to downplay the separate cultivation of each child as "a specimen of humanity." Wincingly, Ryan regrets Dewey's neglect of high culture, and the intellectual polishing of a handful of truly excellent students, for the sake of the "life adaptation" of the vast majority of average kids.

Though Ryan doubts "whether the philosophical project makes complete sense," he does a creditable job in bringing out the principal features of Dewey's philosophy, which is grand and deep, even while remaining close to common sense. Unconcerned with the artificial puzzles of much academic philosophy, Dewey focused throughout his life on understanding man's place in nature, on grasping human behavior in its natural habitat. The first principle of his philosophy, we might say, was that action is an invasion of the unknown, because the world is shot through with contingency. Here is a typical and wonderful passage, not cited by Ryan, from *Experience and Nature*:

Man finds himself living in an aleatory world; his existence involves, to put it baldly, a gamble. The world is a scene of risk; it is uncertain, unstable, uncannily unstable. Its dangers are irregular, inconstant, not to be counted upon as to their times and seasons.... Everything that man achieves and possesses is got by actions that may involve him in other and obnoxious consequences in addition to those wanted and enjoyed.... While unknown consequences flowing from the past dog the present, the future is even more unknown and perilous; the present by that fact is ominous.

All human action is attended with uncertainty and so, as a consequence, intelligent action requires us to make our peace with doubt and to suspend our unrealistic and self-stultifying craving for certainty and closure. Dewey's widely acknowledged "nobility" consists partly in his ability to look the terrifying contingency of human life in the face, while preserving his buoyant spirits and not

POLITICAL INTRIGUE



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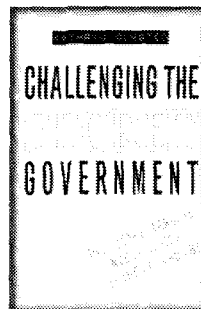
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collapsing into cynicism or Platonism.

Platonism in this context is shorthand for a traditional dualist philosophy that promises psychological serenity to a cozily situated intellectual elite. It offers surcease from surrounding perils which human beings are helpless to overcome and it offers escape from a world in which everything we love is destined to perish. Contemplation of a world without change, a timeless realm beyond the irrational world of becoming, is meant to provide sweet consolation, at least to a few, for a bitter world they can never control.

This old-European search for stability beyond change, for rest beyond motion, was still observable in some quarters, Dewey believed, especially in the snobbish elevation of pure thought over practical training and in the image of universities as "asylums of refuge." He saw Robert Hutchins's attempt at the University of Chicago to organize the curriculum around timeless truths as nearly "deranged," based as it was on the idea that "higher intellectual life must be protected from the contamination of practical life." It was explainable, Dewey believed, only as a fossilized residue of a pretechnological aristocratic society, in which a leisure class feigned retreat into a closed garden where messy practical problems did not intrude.

Fear of contamination, Dewey thought, was just as incisively expressed in Cartesian dualism, especially in the distinction between subject and object. What irked him particularly was the implausible suggestion that the human mind perches outside of nature looking in. He therefore replaced the subject-object dichotomy with the organism-environment scheme, which assumes physical contiguity, not to mention homogeneity, between knower and known.

While human science is "about" the world, it is simultaneously "in" the world. Consciousness itself arises only when a

human organism makes demands on its environment, is rudely rebuffed and must reconsider its approach. If we had no problems, we would be unconscious. Formulated differently, all knowledge is practical. The concepts of mankind are like the claws of the beasts, although more tentative and hypothetical. Ideas are essentially rules of thumb.

Science, then, is less a picture of the world than an organ of action in the world, an incomplete set of revisable maps for navigating in an environment strewn confusingly with obstacles and opportunities. Skepticism may be a problem for philosophy professors, but it is otherwise irrelevant, since it makes no more sense to ask if our ideas "fit" the world than to ask if our hands "fit" the world. By stressing the practical origins and consequences of science, it should be said, Dewey means to draw attention to its moral dimension, that is, to its fabulous contribution to the relief of man's estate. Wholly unlike many of his contemporary "anti-foundationalist" followers, he virtually worshiped natural science and the Baconian project of mastering nature.

This approach to knowledge has a number of problems. The Yankee-ingenuity theory of science as an outgrowth of practical problem-solving has a lot to be said in its favor, but it surely underestimates the contributions of European leisure classes, mathematical speculation and the motive of disinterested curiosity in the development of modern physics and chemistry. Since he defined technology as problem-solving, Dewey never saw technology itself as a problem or a producer of problems. The fact that we cannot decide politically which inventions we want and which we do not want was a shortcoming of the scientific age on which he did not care to focus. It is not exactly crazy for Dewey to take scientific inquiry as a model for his ideal democratic community, since science is both democratic and communitarian in a way; but his analogy between science and politics fails to convince. Science assumes prior agreement about the problems being solved, while politics inevitably involves intractable disagreement about how to define the problems a community must collectively confront.

The intellectual exhilaration of reading Dewey does not easily survive the attempt to paraphrase his theories or to summarize their conclusions. This is as true of Ryan's book as of many others. Dewey's genius, it seems, cannot be located in propositions, only in his relentless efforts at breaking down the inherited dualisms (subject/object, means/

ends, community/individual) which distort our thinking. The continued dominance in both common thought and academic thought of these dualisms testifies to Dewey's ambition and explains his lasting appeal. Before we applaud, however, we might ask if there is really no rational ground for retaining some of the dualisms that Dewey tried to flatten out or dismantle. This, I think, is what Ryan wants to suggest when, however tentatively, he ends up defending private withdrawal from the community against Dewey's apotheosis of social engagement.

Speaking of inconsistencies, it also seems inconsistent to praise Dewey for his stirring enthusiasm, as Ryan does, only to turn around and scold him for not being bitter and cynical enough. More than inconsistent, it is wrong. Dewey was neither so naïve about human nature nor so hopelessly optimistic as Reinhold Niebuhr and others made out. He insisted that evil was a practical problem, not a theological one, because he rightly understood that the self-confidence to struggle for improvement is always based upon difficult-to-demonstrate estimates of what is possible. His seemingly sunny claims about the possibility of remedying injustices and evils are not meant, therefore, as empirical claims that can be refuted by an unblinkered look at the grisly deeds and inclinations of humankind. As his emphasis on the aleatory world makes clear, Dewey did not really think that nature is "on our side." And is it reasonable to assume that he truly expected his teleological fantasy of a Great Community to become a reality in the future? In fact, his postulate that our concrete situation can usually be improved by intelligent effort was consciously styled as faith rather than knowledge. He used it rhetorically, to boost our efforts and to concentrate our thoughts.

Ryan reports that he sought out John Dewey in an attempt to escape from Bertrand Russell's "disgust with life," from a cynicism which was founded on an intuition that the universe is indifferent or hostile to human aspirations. Finally, Ryan wants us to feel tragically torn between Russell's unsparing intellect and Dewey's noble character. But this is a false choice. For what does Dewey show, if not that a disillusioned mind can coexist with a hopeful and undisgusted heart?

STEPHEN HOLMES is the author most recently of *Passions and Constraint: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy* (University of Chicago Press).

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Home Away From Home

BY GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON

The Black Diaspora: Five Centuries of the Black Experience Outside Africa by Ronald Segal

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 477 pp., \$27.50)

The dispersal of African populations brought about by the Atlantic slave trade was probably the greatest involuntary migration in human history. Between the early sixteenth century and the late nineteenth century, roughly 12 million West Africans were transported in chains—and often under the most unspeakable conditions—across the Atlantic to labor as slaves on the plantations established by European colonists in the New World. Between 10 and 20 percent of them died on the high seas before reaching the Americas. The 10 million or so who survived have approximately 100 million descendants, concentrated mostly in the United States, Brazil and the West Indies.

In none of these societies, as Ronald Segal demonstrates in this excellent historical survey, has the racial distinctions and disadvantages created by the process of enslavement been entirely obliterated, despite the fact that more than a century—in some cases more than a century and a half—has passed since emancipation from servitude. Segal does not have much to say, however, about the smaller but still substantial numbers who were transported to mainland Spanish colonies with Indian majorities (as many as 100,000 to Mexico alone), where they were absorbed, almost without trace, into a mestizo population that was predominantly Native American and Spanish. Explicitly, and with more justification, he declines to treat the other side of the black Diaspora—the extraction of comparable numbers of blacks from East Africa to the Middle East as the result of an Arab slave trade that lasted for more than a millennium. (This is a story with different causes and consequences, although a comparison might prove instructive.) But his decision to include a chapter on blacks in Britain makes this more than just a study of New World slaves and their descendants.

The Black Diaspora is the first effort I know of to deal comprehensively with the African experience outside Africa and the Middle East. The subject is vast and

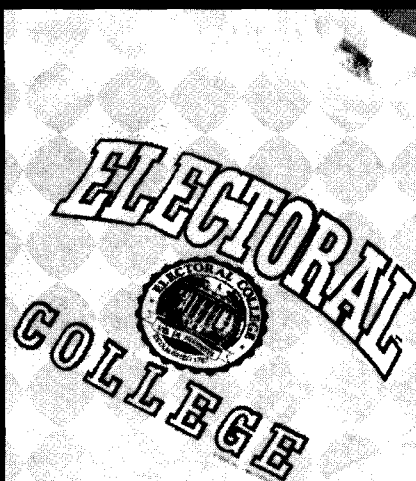
requires a breadth of knowledge that professional historians, who normally study the colonies or former colonies of only one of the European nations involved in the enslavement of Africans, are unlikely to possess. Segal is a British-based journalist and an editor of books on Africa. An expatriate South African, he has had a long association with the African National Congress. His credentials as a white supporter of black liberation with a deep knowledge of the African base make him a sympathetic observer of the Diaspora who also has some of the detached perspective of an outsider.

As Segal points out in his introduction, he has not written a book of original scholarship. This would have been impossible, given the scope of his inquiry. He has mined and synthesized a multitude of specialized studies on aspects of the Diaspora and has supplemented his vast reading with personal observations of the current situation of black people in all of the societies that fall under his purview. As someone who has worked mainly on the history of black-white relations in the United States, I can attest that Segal has done a masterful job of synthesizing for the general reader the best scholarship on that part of his subject, especially on the period before emancipation. (I found only a couple of minor and inconsequential errors.)

Still, those expecting a work of sustained comparative analysis will be disappointed. If the book had been written by an historical sociologist or a comparative historian, it would have stepped back more often to identify and explain the similarities and differences among the black experiences described. Once he has provided a general account of the original encounter between African societies and European slave traders, Segal is content for the most part to tell a somewhat disconnected series of localized stories, although in the last three chapters he does attempt to summarize the common features and generalize about “the soul of the Diaspora.”

Such a book defies summary, but it does have some distinctive points of

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emphasis and interpretation. Segal devotes several chapters to slave resistance and rebellion. He describes in detail virtually every major slave uprising that occurred—among others, the maroon wars of Guyana and Surinam, the black revolution that led to the independence of Haiti, slave insurrections and maroon activity in Jamaica, and the Brazilian resistance that took a special form when escaped slaves established an independent republic in the interior during the seventeenth century that survived for about 150 years. Segal recognizes that rebellions tended to be less frequent and smaller in scale in North America than elsewhere, although he does indicate that they occurred more often than the generalizations of some recent historians would suggest.

The exceptional features of the society and the topography of the American South explain this relative paucity of organized, collective resistance to slavery. Plantations were likely to be smaller than in Brazil and the Caribbean, ratios of white to black population were higher, and the kind of remote mountain or forest terrain in which maroon colonies could thrive was either too far away from the plantation belts or already inhabited by hostile frontier whites who relished the rewards paid for recapturing and returning fugitives. Segal's point in stressing violent resistance is to make it clear that nowhere did blacks resign themselves to enslavement. They asserted their right to be free and independent men and women by fighting back or running away whenever they had a good opportunity.

Besides its relative paucity of large-scale rebellions, the Southern United States differed from most other New World slave societies in other ways. In agreement with much recent scholarship, Segal shows that slaves tended to be fed, clothed, housed and medicated better in the Old South than elsewhere and that they consequently enjoyed a remarkable and unprecedented rate of natural increase. The fact that the United States today has the largest black population anywhere in the Diaspora is remarkable, given the fact that many more slaves were transported to Brazil or even to the island plantation colonies of Haiti and Jamaica than ever landed in the English North America.

The reasons for this demographic success were primarily economic rather than humanitarian. The coincidence of the nineteenth-century cotton boom and partially successful efforts to outlaw the international slave trade made Southern slaveholders dependent for their labor needs on the successful reproduction of

the slave population. One is tempted to add that the capitalistic, entrepreneurial culture that many of them shared with their northern compatriots made them more attuned to the requirements of capital accumulation and long-term profitability than slaveowners in a less developed, more traditional society would have been. If this is the good news about the fate of people of African descent in North America, the bad news is that racism—which was everywhere a concomitant of slavery—was more intense, certainly more out in the open, in the United States than in the other biracial or multiracial societies that Segal describes. It was the only place where intermarriage was made illegal and where racial segregation was mandated by law. During the slave era it had far-and-away the lowest rate of manumission, the result in part of legislation making it very difficult for masters to free their own slaves.

Prejudice and discrimination were facts of life for people of African descent everywhere. Racial equality is still far from being a reality in Brazil, where enormous black disadvantage is obscured, as Segal shows graphically, by the myth of "racial democracy" and color-blindness, or in Haiti, where the surrogate whites of the mulatto caste have retained social and economic hegemony. But even today, in Segal's account, the situation of African Americans seems particularly desperate, especially if one's standard is the economic and social opportunities that a rich and democratic nation like the United States should be able to provide for its citizens. In a chapter called "The Wasteland of the American Promise," he describes the desolation of the ghetto (as represented by downtown Detroit) and the resurgence of racist politics in "camouflaged" form.

Segal is aware that the open and explicit racism that has prevailed historically in the United States has had the effect of promoting greater group consciousness and political mobilization among blacks than in Brazil or even the West Indies, but he does not reflect as much as he could have done on the implications of this counter-racism. The paradoxical result is that American blacks have organized more effectively to fight for equality than those elsewhere in the Diaspora. In the 1960s, the civil rights movement brought an end to legalized racial discrimination in the United States.

Segal describes a meeting in São Paulo to commemorate the abolition of slavery in which no blacks were on the platform. This symbolizes, he contends, "the translation of blacks, in the dominant consciousness of Brazil, from indispensability in the past to invisibility today."

I suspect that many white Americans would be susceptible to a similar attack of amnesia—on the false assumption that equality or "racial democracy" has already been achieved—were it not for the adamant refusal of most African Americans to endorse the proposition that racism is no longer a significant obstacle to black progress.

Not wanting to portray the blacks of the Diaspora as merely or simply the victims of slavery and racism, Segal takes great pains to demonstrate what they have achieved despite the obstacles they faced. To the extent that it destabilized slavery and encouraged abolitionism, slave rebelliousness was successful politics as well as heroic defiance. The great cultural achievement of the Diaspora was in the arts, and especially in music and dance. Out of the black experience came the blues, jazz, rock and roll, samba, calypso, rumba, salsa and many other musical and dance styles. This rhythmic and expressive music is, according to Segal, "the soul of the Diaspora." In his view, it is music rather than religion that has served as a cultural sustainer and unifier, since the various forms of Afro-Christianity divided rather than united blacks and more often counseled political passivity than struggle.

But what, one wonders, is the political content of music, and how can it be translated into politics? Religious beliefs may promote acquiescence, but they also have the capacity to inspire concerted political action, as Martin Luther King Jr. demonstrated so powerfully in the 1950s and '60s. In making aesthetic style and expressiveness the essence of a common diasporic consciousness, Segal seems to be rejecting the possibility that people of African descent in different countries can have a common political goal or agenda, beyond, that is, the commitment that they may share with liberal whites to universal ideals of equality and human rights.

Such a rejection might explain a striking lacuna or omission in a book that is otherwise comprehensive—a total neglect of the Pan-African movements that originated in the Diaspora and then spread to Africa itself. The fragmentary and episodic character of Segal's account of the post-emancipation period is due partly to the fact that he ignores the efforts of black intellectuals and movements throughout the Diaspora to communicate with each other in the hope of creating a common consciousness that would unify black people everywhere against enslavement, disfranchisement and colonial domination. One does not have to endorse the ideology of these movements to recognize that they were a

significant element in the intellectual history of the black Diaspora.

Absent from these pages are the great proponents of nineteenth-century "Pan-Negroism"—Edward Blyden from the Danish West Indies and Alexander Crummell from New York—and the efforts of the black West Indian barrister Henry Sylvester Williams and the African American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois, among others, to create a Pan-African movement in the early twentieth century. Not mentioned are the Pan-African conferences of 1900, 1919, 1921, 1923 and 1927, in which blacks from the Diaspora and those from Europe's African colonies attempted to launch a unified struggle against racial injustice. Segal might well reply that this movement can be slighted in a broad survey because it was initiated by a tiny intellectual elite and attracted the support of relatively few blacks in the Diaspora. But this was hardly the case with the populist Pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association that flourished in the period just after World War I. A Jamaican black nationalist who shifted his base of operations to Harlem in 1917, Garvey attracted hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of followers throughout the Anglophone black Diaspora as well as in Africa itself.

Segal does devote half a page to Garvey, but he treats him simply as a militant exemplar of African American protest and makes a questionable claim about his pioneering role in developing "a constitutional form of pressure that would become an increasingly potent component in the struggle for civil rights." Actually, Garvey viewed the constitutional struggle of the NAACP as futile because of the strength and the durability of white racism in the United States and devoted his main attention to the unification of blacks throughout the world behind the liberation of Africa from colonialism. Segal makes no mention of the international and Afrocentric character of his movement, or of the substantial support it attracted from blacks outside the United States. This is a telling omission. By failing to discuss the controversies generated within the Diaspora by Pan-Africanist movements, Segal depoliticizes his subject.

In his treatment of the contemporary black-white relations in the United States, Segal devotes some critical attention to the current vogue of Afrocentrism. His charge that its advocates tend to substitute an idealized and mythological African past for the realities of the African American historical experience is justified. But as an historian he should have been more curious about why black

nationalism or separatism of one kind or another reemerges in the United States whenever the American dream of equality for all begins to appear unrealizable to many African Americans (as seems to be the case right now). His own account of the persistence of racism in the United States might have given him a deeper understanding of what provoked many blacks in the 1920s or today to give up on the hope of being incorporated into a common color-blind society and to embrace a purely African identity as an alternative.

I cannot help thinking that Segal's failure to treat Pan-Africanism or black nationalism as a significant aspect of the thought and culture of the Diaspora may be somehow related to his long affiliation with the African National Congress in South Africa. As I have discovered in my own research comparing black movements and ideologies in the United States and South Africa, the ANC has been engaged in a long struggle with "Africanist" tendencies within the liberationist movement. A major difference between the ANC and the rival Pan-Africanist Congress has been on the question of whether the struggle against white supremacy should be based on race consciousness and a primary identification with black people throughout the world, or on a specifically South African "nonracialism" that plays down racial or ethnic identities in favor of class affiliations (in the Marxist version) or a common humanity (in the liberal or Christian variant). However admirable such views may be—and I find them quite admirable—they should not blind the historian to the fact that blacks in the Diaspora have at times embraced a defensive racialism and ethno-nationalist politics of their own to counter claims of white racists that Europeans have a natural or historically acquired right to dominate "lesser breeds." My hunch is that the missing chapter on Pan-Africanist ideas and movements in the Diaspora may reflect an ANC-inspired form of "political correctness"—a reluctance to face up to the importance of a viewpoint that one's party has rejected.

If Segal's book does not do everything that might have been expected, it does cover many aspects of the subject very well. It is a worthy first attempt to write a general history of the black Diaspora, and it deserves to be read by anyone who is troubled by the persistence of racism and devoted to the cause of human rights.

GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON is the author most recently of *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (Oxford University Press).

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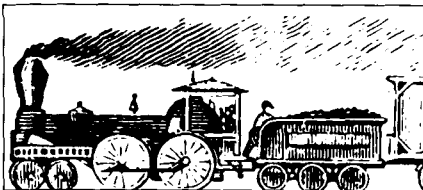
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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Sweet and savage

ONCE UPON A TIME, HARLEQUIN heroes were febrile, restless, impetuous. They seduced. They abandoned. They plundered. They had names like Rhys ap Gruffydd and Roderic the Rogue. Bodices were torn. Chests rippled. Copper-haired virgins pantingly relinquished their innocence. No more. According to *The New York Times*'s John Tierney, today's libidinous housewife seeks tamer fare. Tierney, who primed himself for Valentine's Day at the sherbet-colored headquarters of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd., reports on the apotheosis of a new breed of pulp hero—the "Fabulous Father," to whom a new line of Silhouette romances is devoted. As the culmination of years of market research, the "Fab Dad" experiences no keen yearnings, save a placid wish to "balance courtship with child-rearing." He is as docile and pliant as a winter-blooming shrub. "This man might not immediately seem like the perfect fantasy partner," writes Tierney of "Jace McCall," the dishwashing hero of *A Father for Always*. "[B]ut women respond to the hero's nurturing instinct."

MCCALL WOULD SURELY FLEE, apron strings flying behind him, at the sight of Steve Morgan, the irascible hero of Rosemary Rogers's *Sweet, Savage Love*. Morgan is described on the book's back cover as a "handsome, hot-tempered devil ... a dashing, dangerous soldier of fortune." He is all that, and more. Thrown together with the 16-year-old Ginny Brandon, Morgan does not proselytize for the joys of fatherhood. Instead he makes the fiery-tressed teenager his captive love slave. As an adolescent, I remember swiping this 1974 trash classic from my mother, expecting yet another Cartlandesque tearstained best-seller. I was wrong. When we first encounter Morgan, he is firmly relieving Ginny of her virginity—fighting off her choked, indignant protests by "catching her wrist and squeezing it cruelly until she cried out with pain." After he ravages her a second time, she tries to shoot him. Again he manages to forestall her, "putting his booted foot over the barrel and yanking her up by her hair. ... She felt him push her forward, twisting her arms behind her until she fell onto her knees in the dust,

sobbing with pain and defiance." When he takes her yet a third time, Ginny opens her mouth to scream. "'Please,' he growled, 'Try to restrain your cries of ecstasy.'" Repelled at first by Morgan's festering wounds and rough ways, our heroine is soon brought around. "At one moment, her hands flailed against him. And at the next—she could not recall, later, how it came about—her hands were clinging to him, instead!"

HOW DID WE COME TO LOSE THIS breathless machismo? "The problems writers choose reflect the problems in contemporary society," explains David Borcherding in the *Romance Writers' Sourcebook*.

"The relationship between hero and heroine has become equal, a partnership." A gladdening social milestone; but after picking up Harlequin's *Baby Beat*—a new series featuring a trio of "caring police officers ... who've gone from fighting crime to crooning lullabies"—I began to miss the rape and pilage of my youth. The lovemaking of these soppy cops is "restrained, non-aggressive ... and in no way threatening." Their passion for household drudgery, by contrast, is evoked with near-pornographic fervor. After a candlelit dinner, "the last thing Robin saw was Jake doing battle with a Bundt pan. ... A few minutes later, from the bedroom where she was nursing Peter, she thought she heard him working on the washing machine." Before long, "Cole," too, is galumphing off into the kitchen. "He stood at the sink, his hands in hot spray water," breathes the narrator. "He was concentrating on washing the food remains from a plate that had a delicate pattern of blue and white flowers stenciled on the surface. *Just the sort of serveware for someone like Julie, he thought.*" Give me Steve Morgan.

OH WELL, AT LEAST WE STILL HAVE C-SPAN. In its exhaustive coverage of the New Hampshire primary, the live-action network for political junkies reached a dizzying new pinnacle. Consider Lamar Alexander. After the votes had been tallied, all the major networks ran snippets of the former governor's official remarks. They showed him noodling around on a piano, his face aglow with childlike wonderment. Who but C-SPAN, in its deadpan prurience, would also see fit to document the candidate's intervening journey from the podium to the Steinway? Here was Lamar Alexander, jostling and elbowing his way past crowds of supporters, his neighborly grin nowhere in sight. "Mind if I join you?" he bellowed, nearly knocking a sax player off his feet. "Mind—if—

I—join—you!" Who but C-SPAN, moreover, would linger excruciatingly amid the detritus of Bob Dole's rented ballroom, capturing the pathos of the gaunt, beard-shadowed Dole-folk as they rubbed one another's shoulders and gloomily sang along with the band ("I'm a Dole man," was the song of the hour, performed to the tune of Otis Redding's "Soul Man"). And C-SPAN was the only network that saw fit to air the piteous musings of Steve Forbes, following the mogul's crushing fourth-place finish. "If you're losing your hair, blame it on the flat tax," he scowled. "If it gets cold out, blame it on the flat tax." Standing behind him, inexplicably, was the comedian Joan Rivers, waving and mugging for the cameras. As I said, only on C-SPAN.



HAS ANYONE ELSE noticed that *The Weekly Standard*, the journal that promised us the inside scoop on the future palpitations of the conservative psyche, has flamboyantly

muffed the most momentous developments of the GOP race? On January 22, the *Standard* chided other news outlets—including this magazine—for wasting precious ink on "the sinking Buchanan," whom it dismissed as "a bit player," "stuck in single digits ... [who] actually is getting less popular with voters. ... " The *Standard's* brush-off was total: "[T]here's no evidence that Buchanan is having any influence on Dole or any other candidate with regard to major issues. ... [B]oredom with Dole is hardly a reason to boost a candidate with no chance of winning the Republican nomination—especially one with so little influence on the debate." Oops. On January 29, the magazine wrote Lamar Alexander's political obituary, predicting a "humiliating loss" and explaining in detail "the reason this is not Alexander's year." But the magazine's biggest howler was in its latest issue. Sent to press too late to reflect the results of the Iowa caucus, the February 19 edition featured a paean to "The awesome power of the Forbes wallet." The Forbes juggernaut, wrote the *Standard*, is "confirming two political truths: Negative advertising works, and the American people have nothing against multimillionaires' financing their own campaigns." The article's kicker was a plaintive quote from Alexander: "I am trusting the voters to add up all the private conversations [I've had with them] and make that worth more than all the money spent on television." "Two weeks from now," the *Standard* sneered, "Alexander's words may look hopelessly naïve." No, that's the *Standard*.

RUTH SHALIT

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